Flashback
*Journal of the Washington County Historical Society*
Volume 69, No. 3
Fall 2019

# Washington County Historical Society: A Brief History

*Tebbetts House, early 20th century*

*Headquarters House, early 21st century*

## Washington County Historical Society

118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701
http://www.washcohistoricalsociety.org


### Submissions


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### Membership

Society membership is invited to those interested in preservation of Washington County history. Annual dues for categories of members are: Senior, Student, Public Library, $15; General, $25; Trail Blazer, $50; Explorer $100; Wagon Master, $250; Pioneer, $500; Statesperson, $1,000; Empire Builder, $5,000.

Members are mailed *Flashback* each quarter. Available past issues are $6 each, postpaid. Add $1 postage for issues printed in 1951 through February 1972. Web site: washcohistoricalsociety.org or headquartershouse.org.

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# Flashback

Journal of the Washington County Historical Society

*Preserving our past for future generations*

Volume 69 | Fall 2019 | Number 3


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*On the Cover:* (Top) The Tebbetts residence, shown in an early 20th century photograph, is now known as Headquarters House (below). Along with surrounding property, it serves as the Washington County Historical Society office, a venue for WCHS community events, and a period museum. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-2144)

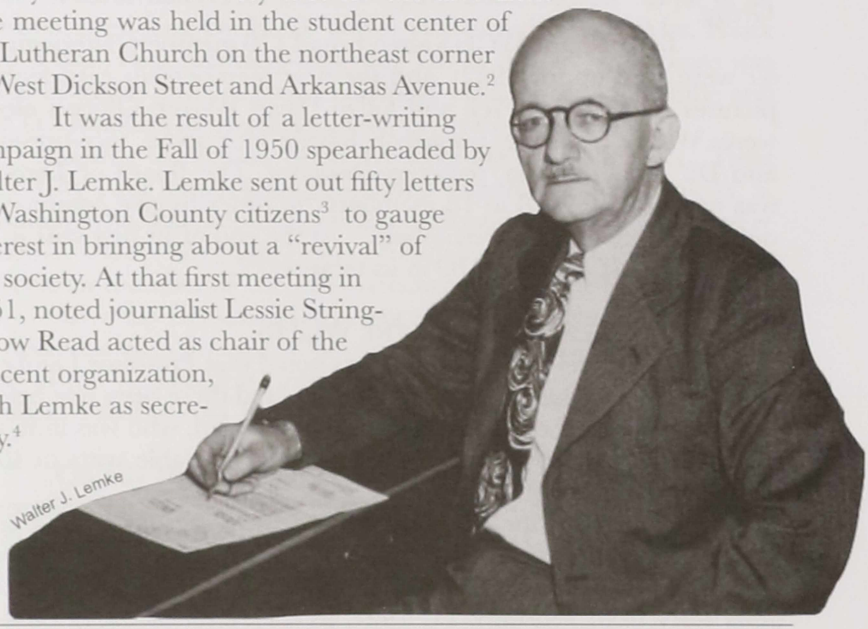
# A Brief History of the WCHS from 1951 to the Present

*By J. B. Hogan*

## Beginnings and Early Days

On Sunday afternoon, February 18, 1951, the Washington County Historical Society met for the first time.[1] The meeting was held in the student center of the Lutheran Church on the northeast corner of West Dickson Street and Arkansas Avenue.[2]

It was the result of a letter-writing campaign in the Fall of 1950 spearheaded by Walter J. Lemke. Lemke sent out fifty letters to Washington County citizens[3] to gauge interest in bringing about a "revival" of the society. At that first meeting in 1951, noted journalist Lessie Stringfellow Read acted as chair of the nascent organization, with Lemke as secretary.[4]



Walter J. Lemke

*J. B. Hogan is a local historian and author who has published more than 260 stories and poems and nine books. He is a frequent contributor to Flashback.*

The group met to hear a series of speakers including Bentonville Mayor Alvin Seamster, who spoke about Washington County history, and Judge T. H. Humphreys, who gave reminiscences of bygone days. Retired Fayetteville Cumberland Presbyterian minister G. W. Thompson addressed the group on the topic of pioneer schools.[5]

Lessie Stringfellow Read introduced the hostesses for the day. Among them were Roberta Fulbright, Amanda Stone Hilton, Mrs. Tom Feathers, and Mrs. Walter J. Lemke. Professor Lemke then presented plans for the society's future, including pilgrimages to Evergreen Cemetery and the Prairie Grove Battlefield.[6]

Charter Members paid $2 to join the WCHS and Lemke presented each of them with a special souvenir membership card that featured maps of old Lovely County and present day Washington County.[7]

At the end of 1951, the society was making plans for its first ever annual meeting, and it was held on January 15, 1952, in the Washington Hotel on the southwest corner of the Square (where Art Ventures is located today). Members were given a chance to relate historical incidents or personal reminiscences, and among those presenting were Lessie Stringfellow Read, Cane Hill folklorist and musician Booth Campbell, Fount Richardson, Lola Ellis, Ella Hurst, and Ida Gregg.[8]

By 1952, the WCHS already had 179 members (although only 47 were paid up for 1952), and the new membership card featured pictures of Archibald Yell and Judge David Walker. Officers elected were: Walter J. Lemke, president; Jobelle Holcombe, vice-president; and Dr. Tom Feathers, secretary-treasurer. The Board of Directors was expanded from 8 to 16 members "in order to give communities outside Fayetteville representation."[9] At the end of its first year in operation, the WCHS had $.80 in its treasury.[10]

## An Earlier Incarnation of the WCHS

In the previous section, it was noted that Professor Lemke referred to the "revival"[11] of the WCHS.[12] Had there been one before? If so, knowledge about when it started and ended, who was in it, and so forth was not particularly well known or available without some digging into historical sources.

Fortunately, the February 1984 issue of *Flashback* has a brief article referencing the earlier historical society and providing some hitherto nearly hidden information about it. The article points to a news story from February 11, 1927, in the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* (the earlier name of the *Northwest Arkansas Times*). "Looking forward (to) Fayetteville's Centennial in 1928," the unsigned article noted, "the

Headquarters House, at 118 E. Dickson, was built shortly before the Civil War. The Washington County Historical Society purchased it in 1967. Today, Headquarters House serves as a museum as well as the WCHS main office and bookstore.

Fayetteville and Washington County Historical Society has been organized to take the lead in preparation for this event."[13]

A list of officers for the new organization is given: Major B. R. Davidson, president; Dr. H. D. Wood, vice-president; and Mrs. Frank (Zillah Cross) Peel, secretary-treasurer. Dr. D. (David) Y. Thomas was named historian and program chairman, with Jobelle Holcombe and Scott D. Hamilton as members of the program committee.[14]

Among the charter members were Mr. and Mrs. A. L. Trent (he of City Park fame), Julia Vaulx (first Fayetteville librarian), W. S. Campbell (who was preparing his now indispensable book *100 Years of Fayetteville, 1828-1928*), and Lessie Stringfellow Read (who would also be a charter member of the 1951 reincarnation of the Society).[15]

After the Centennial, references to the "original" WCHS are not easily found. A June 22, 1938, article in the *Northwest Arkansas Times* refers to the Washington County Historical Society and lists charter members Zillah Cross Peel, D. Y. Thomas, and Lessie Stringfellow Read.[16]

On July 16, 1978, the *Times* printed a sesquicentennial edition, celebrating Fayetteville's 150 years of existence. In this issue, they reproduced a *Flashback* article from May 1978 by Colonel Jack F. Diggs which confirmed that at the time of the town's centennial in 1928 Major B. R. Davidson was president of the WCHS and that Zillah Cross Peel was its Treasurer.[17] He did not give sources for this information.

So even though we don't know a lot about the first WCHS,

it appears to have existed from 1927 until at least 1938. It may have ended when several of its "charter members" died. B. R. Davidson died in 1938, Zillah Cross Peel in 1941, and David Y. Thomas in 1943. It seems that the earlier version of the WCHS may have died with them, to be "revived" about a decade or so later by, among others, a remaining charter member, Lessie Stringfellow Read, and a University of Arkansas professor who had watched it all unfold–Walter J. Lemke.

### Walter J. Lemke

Professor Walter J. Lemke's contribution to the WCHS, the city, county, and state cannot be overstated. A tireless worker, Lemke not only founded the Society but was its heart and soul from 1951 until his death in 1968. He was born in 1891 in Wausau, Wisconsin, to Carl and Ulrika Block Lemke and graduated from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, in 1911. In 1916 he married Marie Hamp and they had two children, twins Carol and Walter H. ("Bud") born in 1921. Walter J. Lemke went on to complete a Master of Science degree at Northwestern University in 1928.[18]

Shortly after graduation, Lemke was interviewed and hired by University of Arkansas President John C. Futrall and came to Fayetteville for the 1928 fall semester to establish and head the journal-

The Archibald Yell law office originally was located beside Waxhaws, Yell's home on South College. The building was moved behind Headquarters House on March 10, 1992.

ism department. In addition to his teaching duties, Lemke, a prolific and skilled writer, wrote many columns over the years for the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat/Northwest Arkansas Times* including "Ozark Moon," "This and That," and "Angel Food."

During World War II he put out a series of newsletters that he later collected under the title *From the Basement of Old Main.* The newsletters consisted of correspondence among and news items for those in the military, particularly his former students like Ernie Deane, Johnnie Porter, Maurice "Footsie" Britt, and many, many others.

After the war he was honored at Razorback Stadium as the "University Man of the Year" and was given a Plymouth car "in appreciation for services rendered to former students during World War II." Among the attendees were Arkansas Governor Ben Laney, Maurice Britt (Medal of Honor winner who would later serve as Arkansas Lieutenant Governor), and university president Arthur M. Harding.[19]

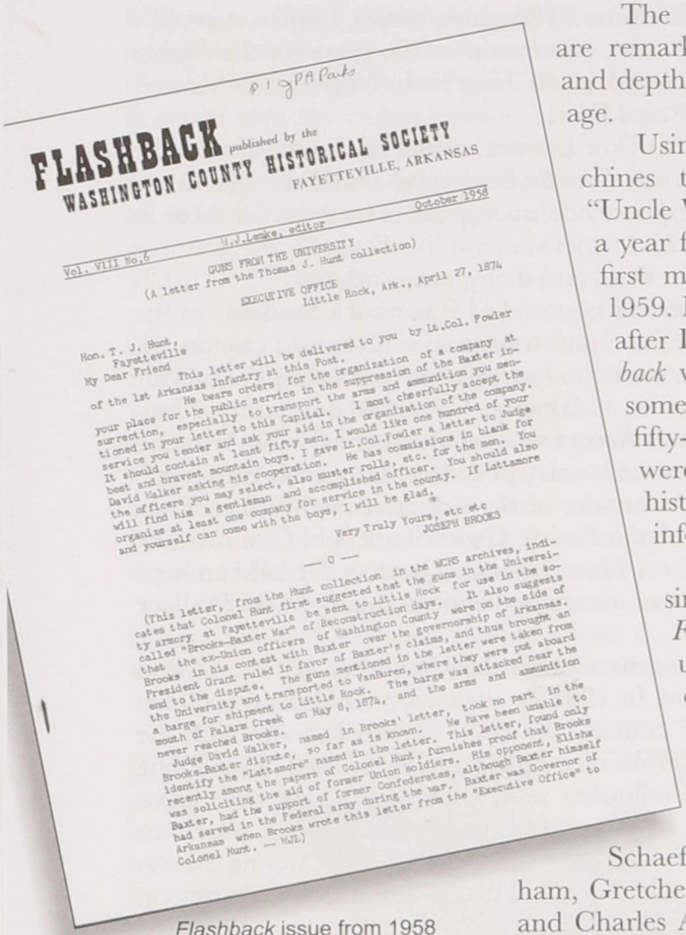
Lemke also was a founder of the Arkansas High School Press Association, a member of the Prairie Grove Battlefield Commission, and associate editor of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. He held an honorary doctorate degree from his original alma mater, Baldwin-Wallace College.[20]

Professor Lemke retired from the University of Arkansas in 1959 but remained active. In 1962 he organized the Arkansas Genealogical Society and, of course, continued his involvement with the WCHS at a high level. Lemke died on December 4, 1968, after a long and fruitful career. The following year, 1969, his papers were given to the University of Arkansas and are now in the Special Collections Department located on Level One in Mullins Library. Among this remarkable collection are some 2,873 letters, 16 scrapbooks, 57 cartoon sketches, and 1,723 photographs.[21]

In 1988, the University of Arkansas honored Walter J. Lemke by naming its journalism department after him—a fitting tribute to a man whose legacy is extensive, impressive, and invaluable. Professor Lemke is buried in Fayetteville's historic Evergreen Cemetery just a few feet from another outstanding contributor to the area's local history, W. S. Campbell.

## Flashback and Other Publications

The journal *Flashback* has been a part of the Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) since its beginning in 1951. In that nearly seventy-year span, many editors have worked on the organization's printed "voice." Walter Lemke was editor of *Flashback* from the beginning of the WCHS in early 1951 until his death in December 1968. He was contributing to *Flashback* right up until he died.



FLASHBACK published by the
WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

Vol. VIII No.6 W.J.Lemke, editor October 1958

GUNS FROM THE UNIVERSITY

(A letter from the Thomas J. Hunt collection)

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Little Rock, Ark., April 27, 1874

Hon. T. J. Hunt,
Fayetteville

My Dear Friend — This letter will be delivered to you by Lt.Col. Fowler of the 1st Arkansas Infantry at this Post.

He bears orders for the organization of a company at your place for the public service in the suppression of the Baxter insurrection, especially to transport the arms and ammunition you mentioned in your letter to this Capital. I most cheerfully accept the service you tender and ask your aid in the organization of the company. It should contain at least fifty men. I would like one hundred of your best and bravest mountain boys. I gave Lt.Col.Fowler a letter to Judge David Walker asking his cooperation. He has commissions in blank for the officers you may select, also muster rolls, etc. for the men. You will find him a gentleman and accomplished officer. You should also organize at least one company for service in the county. If Lattamore and yourself can come with the boys, I will be glad.

Very Truly Yours, etc etc
JOSEPH BROOKS

— 0 —

(This letter, from the Hunt collection in the WCHS archives, indicates that Colonel Hunt first suggested that the guns in the University armory at Fayetteville be sent to Little Rock for use in the so-called "Brooks-Baxter War" of Reconstruction days. It also suggests that the ex-Union officers of Washington County were on the side of Brooks in his contest with Baxter over the governorship of Arkansas. President Grant ruled in favor of Baxter's claims, and thus brought an end to the dispute. The guns mentioned in the letter were taken from the University and transported to VanBuren, where they were put aboard a barge for shipment to Little Rock. The barge was attacked near the mouth of Palarm Creek on May 8, 1874, and the arms and ammunition never reached Brooks.

Judge David Walker, named in Brooks' letter, took no part in the Brooks-Baxter dispute, so far as is known. He have been unable to identify the "Lattamore" named in the letter. This letter, found only recently among the papers of Colonel Hunt, furnishes proof that Brooks was soliciting the aid of former Union soldiers. His opponent, Elisha Baxter, had the support of former Confederates, although Baxter himself had served in the Federal army during the war. Baxter was Governor of Arkansas when Brooks wrote this letter from the "Executive Office" to Colonel Hunt. — WJL)

*Flashback* issue from 1958

The Lemke *Flashback* years are remarkable in their breadth and depth of local history coverage.

Using mimeograph machines to print the journal, "Uncle Walt" put out six issues a year from 1951 to 1958. He first made it a quarterly in 1959. From its inception until after Lemke was gone, *Flashback* was full-page size with some forty pages or more—fifty- and sixty-page issues were not uncommon—of historical and genealogical information.[22]

In the fifty-plus years since Lemke's death, *Flashback* has had an unbroken chain of dedicated editors, including Jean and Keith Newhouse, Pat Donat, Ellen Compton Shipley, Don E. Schaefer, Scott Van Laningham, Gretchen Gearhart, Tim Nutt, and Charles Alison. *Flashback*, which has provided almost seven decades of continuous historical material for its readership is currently edited by Patsy Watkins who took on the job in late 2018.[23]

During the "Lemke years," a series of historical "Bulletins" were also published by the WCHS. Around sixty of the bulletins were completed and included such titles as the "Walker Family Album," "Methodists in Fayetteville," and "The Bench and Bar of Washington County, 1828-1961."

In addition to the many Lemke-directed publications (which include several family histories, such as that of renowned nineteenth century Fayetteville resident Judge David Walker), over the decades the WCHS has published or reprinted many books and pamphlets which are sold in the bookstore at Headquarters House. Among these publications are W. S. Campbell's *One Hundred Years of Fayetteville, 1828-*

*1928*; *The Battle of Fayetteville: April 18, 1863* by Russell Mahan, and *The Boston Mountains: Lost in the Ozarks* by noted local historian Velda Brotherton.

More recent titles include Charles Alison's *A Brief History of Fayetteville, Arkansas*; *Images of America: Fayetteville* by Alison and Ellen K. Compton; and *The Square Book: An Illustrated History of the Fayetteville Square* by Anthony J. Wappel with J. B. Hogan.

The bookstore also sells history-based items, such as pencils and even DVDs like University of Arkansas journalism professor Larry Foley's documentary about Fayetteville, *Up Among the Hills*. In recent years, the Bookstore Committee has been chaired by Carolyn Leonard and included Ellen Compton, Don Deweese, and Dee Steele Ness among its members.

Beginning in March 1996, the WCHS formally introduced its newsletter *Flashforward*. In addition to being used to announce fund raising efforts, changes in bylaws, and upcoming events, *Flashforward* has also provided such items as short biographies of Society board members and officers, and brief history articles as well.

The first thirty-two issues of *Flashforward* did not credit a specific editor. With the thirty-third issue, however, Ann Sugg, who already had written many columns for the newsletter, became the first editor to be listed as such. Excepting issues 51 and 52 (no editor was given), Sugg was editor through issue 57 (2005-2009).

A. D. Poole took over the position for issues 58-69 (2009-2012) until his untimely death in September 2012. Charles Alison edited issues 70-71 (2012) and was followed by Tess Kidd who became editor with issue 72 and remained in the position through issue 100 (2012-2018). Dave Edmark, current editor of *Flashforward*, took over with issue 101 in February 2019.

## Constitution/Bylaws

The first constitution of the WCHS, what we now refer to as the bylaws, was published in the April 1951 issue of *Flashback*. It consisted of six items: the name of the organization, members (anyone could join), officers (a president, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer), Board of Directors (number unspecified and named by the officers), meetings (to be held the second Sunday of each month or at the discretion of the board), and dues ($2.00 for the calendar year).[24]

In November of 1956, a new constitution and bylaws replaced the originals,[25] and in December 1959 the Society completed the first draft of articles of incorporation. The following year, 1960, the Washington County Historical Society officially became a non-profit corporation. It was the first historical society in the state to be so

designated.[26] A further revised constitution and set of bylaws was approved May 1972.[27] Since then revisions and amendments have been approved in 1999, 2002, 2012, 2015, and, most recently, in 2019.

## Finances

As mentioned earlier, at the end of the Society's first year, it had a grand total of $.80 in its treasury. Thanks to the success of the organization in bringing on new members and conducting various small fund-raising events, by 1960 the year-end balance was $1,163.06.[28] At the end of the decade in 1969, helped along the way with Washington County Quorum Court grants, that number had grown to $2,257.57.[29]

Ten years later, in 1979, the balance had grown to just shy of $10,000.[30] The overall value of the Society was more than just monetary by this time, because it owned not only Headquarters House but the Ridge House on West Center Street as well.

Thanks to the appreciation of its properties, fund-raising efforts, sound financial practices, generous gifts, and occasional grants, such as those received in 1994 from the Fayetteville Advertising and Promotions Committee[31] and the Otwell Family bequeathment in 1997,[32] the WCHS financial position continued to grow as the old century wound down.

In the first two decades of the new century, slow, steady financial growth continued. By 2017 the overall economic value of the WCHS exceeded $1 million–a long way from that first year's balance of $.80. Thanks to recent Treasurers Lou Beland, Jane Davis, and Theresa Ewing and the Society's Finance Committee, including David Martinson and chair Kim Smith, the WCHS is in a positive financial position as it moves towards its 70th year of existence.

## Membership and Dues

From its humble beginnings in 1951 with just 47 members–thanks to the efforts of Walter Lemke, Tom Feathers, and other founders, as well as the low $2 membership dues–the Society grew steadily. By 1952 there were 179 members and by 1960, some 346. 1961 showed 475 members, and in 1963 a campaign was waged to reach 500–despite a small increase in membership dues to $3 per year.

In 1966, membership reached the 600 plateau and has hovered in that range for much of the time since. Membership grew to 667 in 2008 just before a national economic downturn, which dropped numbers into the mid-500s where they remain today. Membership costs during this time continued to climb as did overall inflation.

Dues were raised to $5 per year in 1973, to $6 at the beginning of 1981, then $7.50 by the fall of 1981. By 1989 they were $10 and in

## WCHS PRESIDENTS: 1951 TO THE PRESENT

| | |
|---|---|
| 1951-1954 | Walter J. Lemke (4 years) |
| 1955-1956 | Fount Richardson |
| 1957 | Robert R. Logan |
| 1958 | Dupree D. Deaver (Springdale) |
| 1959-1960 | Roy A. Scott |
| | |
| 1961-1962 | Tom C. Feathers |
| 1963 | O. E. Williams |
| 1964 | Davis P. Richardson |
| 1965 | John A. Reed |
| 1966 | L. W. Searcy |
| 1967-1969 | Tom Feathers (Repeat – 3 years) |
| | |
| 1970-1971 | Lynn Wade |
| 1972-1974 | Dwain E. Manske (3 years) |
| 1975-1976 | Mrs. David (Carolyn) Newbern |
| 1977-1980 | Col. Larry L. Browne, Jr. (4 years) |
| | |
| 1981-1982 | Cyrus Sutherland |
| 1983-1984 | Lois Lawson Morris |
| 1985 | James A. Pennington |
| 1986-1987 | Mrs. A. D. (Pat) Donat |
| 1988-1989 | Don Hunnicutt |
| | |
| 1990 | Mrs. A. D. (Pat) Donat (Repeat) |
| 1991 | Cyrus Sutherland (Repeat) |
| 1992-1993 | Jean Newhouse |
| 1994-1995 | Herb Lewis |
| 1996 | Ann Wiggans Sugg |
| 1996-1999 | Charles W. Stewart (3 years) |
| 1999-2000 | Michael Pritchard |
| | |
| 2000-2001 | Lionel Skaggs |
| 2002-2004 | Ann Wiggans Sugg |
| 2004-2006 | John Maguire |
| 2006-2008 | Vincent Chadick |
| 2008-2009 | A. D. Poole |
| 2009-2011 | Diana McKee Strange |
| 2011-2013 | Hoyt Purvis |
| 2013-2015 | J. B. (Jerry) Hogan |
| 2015-2017 | Kim Smith |
| 2017-2019 | Maylon Rice |

1996 they were listed as $15 Basic, $25 Family, $50 Sustaining, $100 Mainstay, $500 Benefactor and $1000 Founding. In 1998, the listing was just $15 Basic and $25 Family and it stayed that way through 2001. [*Eds. Note:* In May 2019 the the board made the decision to increase basic dues to $20 in January 2020.]

In the Autumn 2002 issue of *Flashback* membership categories were listed as follows: Senior, Student, Public Library $15; General $25; Trail Blazer $50; Explorer $100; Wagon Master $250; Pioneer $500; Statesman $1,000; Empire Builder $5,000. These membership categories and rates remain the same up to the present day. [*Eds. Note:* In spring 2019 membership categories were changed by the board to Senior, Student, Public Library, General, Trail Blazer, Explorer, Wagon Master, Pioneer, Statesperson, and Empire Builder.]

## Offices

In the first years of the WCHS, its administrative offices were in Walter Lemke's home on E. Dickson Street. To print *Flashback* and other documents during this time, Lemke used the facilities at the University of Arkansas. Then, in 1957, the WCHS rented the former office of Dr. Tom Feathers, secretary of the Society, at 12 1/2 E. Center and located its office there.[33] After a fund-raising campaign, the WCHS acquired a mimeograph machine of its own and for many years thereafter published *Flashback* and other materials with its own equipment.

1967 saw the Society purchase its first historic property, Headquarters House, the former home of car dealer Paris Green, and its offices moved to the new location at 118 E. Dickson Street[34] where they are currently located. In 1971, however, while renting part of Headquarters House as an apartment, administrative offices were shifted to an old, refurbished garage which stood on the northwest corner of the property.[35]

From 1978 to 1984, WCHS offices were located in the Historic Washington County Jail at College Avenue and E. Mountain Street. Finally, in 1984, offices were returned to Headquarters House[36] where they remain up to the present.

## Properties

Over the years, the WCHS has acquired three historically significant properties. Headquarters House at 118 E. Dickson Street, the Sarah Ridge House, 230 W. Center Street, and the law office of Archibald Yell which now sits in the back property of Headquarters House.

Headquarters House was built around 1853 for the Jonas Teb-

The Sarah RIdge House at 230 W. Center Street

betts family. The WCHS purchased it from the Paris Green family in 1967. Green reduced the asking price for the house, and both he and Raymond Rebsamen of Little Rock gave large monetary gifts toward the purchase. In addition, some 700 people around the country, including 100 local individuals and businesses also contributed to help the WCHS buy this wonderful old home. Over the years, many fine families have lived here, including those of Charles Whiting "White" Walker (son of Judge David Walker) and Charles Appleby. Today, Headquarters House is a museum as well as the WCHS main office and bookstore.[37]

The Ridge House was originally a log, dogtrot house, constructed around 1834. In 1839 Sarah Ridge moved here with her children after the killing of husband John, his father Major Ridge, and kinsman Elias Boudinot–all leaders of the Cherokee Treaty Party. Sophia Sawyer came with Mrs. Ridge and founded the influential Fayetteville Female Seminary that same year.

Mrs. Ridge left Fayetteville in 1844 but returned in 1854 when the larger, existing house was first built over the log house. Mrs. Ridge died from pneumonia shortly after her return. The WCHS purchased the property from the Center Street Church of Christ in April 1972. After a December 1975 fire, a fund drive was initiated to restore the house. Currently, rooms in the house are rented out as offices for local professionals.

The Law Office of noted Fayetteville resident, and second

governor of the State of Arkansas, Archibald Yell was built around 1840 in South Fayetteville beside Yell's home Waxhaws which stood on South College on a rise just to the north of the present day Senior Center. The Law Office was purchased from the heirs of Bryan Walker. Fayetteville Restoration, Inc.[38] provided initial financing for the project and Cy Sutherland directed the restoration.

On the plaque at the front of the building, some twenty business and individual donors are listed, including the Bassett Law Firm, Washington County Bar Association, Niblock Law Firm, and Bobby Lee Odom. Among those honored on the plaque are W. S. Campbell and Bryan Walker. The Law Office was moved behind Headquarters House on March 10, 1992.[39]

### Annual Events

Typically, the WCHS holds five major events during the calendar year: Battle of Fayetteville Commemoration, Statehood Day, Ice Cream Social, Annual Meeting, and Holiday Season Open House.

As close to the exact date as possible each year, there is a program commemorating the Battle of Fayetteville which took place on April 18, 1863. On April 18, 1963, the WCHS observed the 100th anniversary of the battle with a program on the lawn of Headquarters House.

Among the speakers that day were O. (Oscar) E. Williams, WCHS president (who unfortunately died just three weeks later) and Earle Cabell, mayor of Dallas, Texas, and grandson of General William Lewis Cabell. General Cabell commanded the Confederate forces during the Battle of Fayetteville and also served as mayor of Dallas in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[40]

Another memorable Battle of Fayetteville program was held Thursday through Saturday, April 18-20, 2013. This commemorated the 150th anniversary of the conflict. The program included a lecture by historian Kim Allen Scott, as well as a candlelight tour of Headquarters House and living history vignettes performed by Heritage School students. The three-day event was capped off by two reenactments of the battle with more than forty Civil War reenactors participating.[41]

Annually, as near to June 15 as possible, the WCHS presents an Arkansas Statehood Day–we became a state on June 15, 1836. Recent programs have been held at the nearby First Christian Church and at Headquarters House. Statehood Day is often tied to the Society's Distinguished Lecturer series as well. Speakers in recent years have included Professor of Ozarks Studies at Missouri State University Dr. Brooks Blevins; Washington County Archivist and Distinguished

WCHS board member Jim Spillars (right) and other Civil War reenactors at a recent Battle of Fayetteville commemoration on Headquarters House grounds.

Citizen Award winner Tony Wappel; former Governor Jim Guy Tucker; and former Senator David Pryor.

Each year, usually in late August, the WCHS holds its Ice Cream Social. Originated by former two-time Society President Cy Sutherland, the first Ice Cream Social was held in the summer of 1972. Writing about that first event, WCHS President Dwain Manske commented that "the surprise of the year was Cy Sutherland's brainchild, our ice cream social, which will now be held annually." This first ICS was not only "brilliantly organized," he added, but also made "several hundred dollars" and provided some "excellent publicity."[42]

Manske also presented an upbeat summary of 1972 saying it "was one of the best years in the history of our society," and he noted that WCHS membership had almost reached 700. He commented on the fund-raising skill of Pat Donat, Al Donaubauer, Betty Lighton, and, again, Cy Sutherland, and informed Society membership that the Sarah Ridge House had been purchased and saved by the WCHS.[43] In recent years, the invaluable contribution of Vince Chadick, former Society president and board member, was of key importance to the success of the Ice Cream Social.

From the very beginning, the WCHS has held an Annual Meeting. The first such gathering was a dinner on January 15, 1952, at the Washington Hotel on the southwest corner of the Square. At that meeting, W. J. Lemke was elected president and Jobelle Holcombe,

vice-president.[44] The Washington was a popular site for the meeting for several years, but it was also held at Ferguson's Cafeteria in the Mountain Inn on East Center Street, at various locations around town, and occasionally on or near the University of Arkansas campus.

In recent years, the Annual Meeting has been held on the first Sunday in October at Mermaids Restaurant on N. College Avenue in Fayetteville. The meeting has been used to present the WCHS' highest honor, the Distinguished Citizen Award–a complete listing of awardees follows this history.

Each December of late, the WCHS also holds a Holiday Season Open House. The Open House celebrates the several holidays held during the month with food, festivities, and fun. In the last few years, Heritage School children go caroling in the nearby Washington-Willow Historic District and at Headquarters House as well.

## Diversity and Out in the County

Around 2014, the WCHS introduced two new committees, the Diverse Settlers of Washington County (originally called the Black Settlers Committee) and Community and Heritage (colloquially known as the "Out in the County" Committee). Chaired by Margaret Clark, the Diverse Settlers Committee has created a number of events including ongoing programs for Black History Month (the first such program in WCHS history) and Native American Month. [The first program honored the Cherokee and was also the first such program in WCHS history.]

The Out in the County group, first chaired by Susan Parks-Spencer and currently by Dee Steele Ness, is designed to reconnect the WCHS to its base mission which is to serve all of Washington County. Representatives from Prairie Grove, Elm Springs, Farmington, Cane Hill, Cincinnati, Summers, and Elkins/Durham meet quarterly to exchange information and projects relating to history in their communities.

## Historic Programs and Heritage School

In 2003, long-time WCHS Board Member and Director of Historic Programs, Dee Dee Lamb started the Heritage School. The program was designed to instruct young people (at first just girls) in "polite manners, etiquette, proper speaking, embroidery, penmanship," and other cultural aspects of antebellum Fayetteville.[45] Particular emphasis was given to the occupants of Headquarters House at the time, Judge Jonas Tebbetts and his family, as well as other famous early local figures like Archibald Yell and Sophia Sawyer. In 2005, the program, which is typically held during the last week of July, was

extended to include boys.[46]

Heritage School students frequently dress in period costumes at various WCHS and community functions where they dance, sing, play instruments, and perform skits relating to local history. Among many other events, they have performed for the WCHS Battle of Fayetteville Commemorative, Ice Cream Social, and Holiday Season Open House, as well as at venues outside the Society's scope such as the Cane Hill Harvest Festival.

Dee Dee Lamb held the position of WCHS Director of Historic Programs from around 1996 until stepping down in 2011. Robin Guadagnini then held the position for one year.[47] In 2012, Judy Costello became the Director of Historic Programs and of the Heritage School and has remained so to the present time.[48] In years when there are qualified candidates, the WCHS presents a senior Heritage School student or students with a monetary scholarship award. Originally called the Heritage Scholarship, today the award is known as the Senior Recognition Award.

## Washington County Master Gardeners

Beginning in 1997, the Washington County Master Gardeners began taking care of the grounds at Headquarters House. Deanna Tannehill initiated contact with the Master Gardeners, whose Janice Ryan was the Project Coordinator from the beginning until 2005. In addition to Ryan, Project Coordinators have included Catherine McDuffie, Dian Holmes, Jan Lefler, Susan Gardner, and Terry Smyers. Current coordinators are Holmes, Smyers, and Geri Alvis.[49]

In 2000, the WCHS House Grounds Committee (later renamed the Garden and Grounds Committee) was created as a liaison between the Society and the Master Gardeners. For a typical year, some thirty or more Master Gardeners work on the grounds of Headquarters House, logging as many as one thousand hours of volunteer work.[50]

In 2011, the Master Gardeners put in almost two thousand hours of work on the grounds of HQ House.[51] Long-time WCHS Board Member Judy Brittenum headed the House Grounds Committee for many years, beginning in 2002 (when she co-chaired the committee with Carl Totemeir)[52] and remained in that capacity until she stepped down in 2018.

## Seventy Years of Local History and Culture

For almost seventy years now, the Washington County Historical Society has survived and thrived. It has published a quarterly journal, an informative newsletter, and many books and pamphlets. It has

bought, restored, and maintained historic properties. It has been and remains a significant contributor in the effort to save the history and culture of the county. Through the years the Society has remained true to its mission to promote pride and interest in and to record and preserve the history and cultural tradition of Washington County.

*Following is the list of Distinguished Citizen Awards from 1951 to the present.*

## WCHS Distinguished Citizen Awards

| | |
|---|---|
| 1951 | Sam Dellinger – No Record Found |
| 1951 | Frank Lewis – No Record Found |
| 1952 | M. W. "Mack" McRoy |
| 1953 | Judge B. F. (Benjamin Franklin) Campbell |
| 1953 | Maude Duncan |
| 1953 | Dr. E. F. Ellis |
| 1953 | Ellen Earle Richardson |
| 1953 | Professor F. S. Root |
| 1954 | Henry B. "Ben" Shreve |
| 1954 | John P. Stokenbury |
| 1955 | Rev. William Sherman |
| 1955 | Mrs. John P. Stafford |
| 1956 | Mary Clem Carnahan Moor |
| 1956 | Homer Pearson |
| 1956 | Evelyn Carnahan Quaile |
| 1956 | Susan Carnahan Rogers |
| 1957 | W. S. Campbell |
| 1957 | Oscar E. Williams |
| 1959 | Dr. Will Hugh Mock |
| 1960 | Dr. P. L. Hathcock |
| 1961 | Miss Harriett King |
| 1962 | Lockwood W. Searcy |
| 1963 | Annie Duke (Mrs. John C.) Futrall |
| 1963 | Ruth Leach |
| 1964 | Admiral Powell Rhea |
| 1965 | W. J. Lemke |
| 1966 | Alcuin "Cap" Eason (see 1999) |
| 1967 | Ella B. Hurst |
| 1968 | Myrtle McCormick Parks |
| 1969 | J. W. Webb |
| 1970 | Naomi Elizabeth Sanders Lewis |

1971 D. D. Deaver
1972 Lloyd McConnell, Sr.
1973 *None Found*
1974 Mrs. Joy Pratt Markham
1975 *None Found*
1976 Ralph Shreve
1977 *None Found*
1978 James K. Gregory
1979-1985 *None found*
1986 Kate Davenport
1986 Miss Elizabeth Dupree Ellis
1986 Dr. Ruth Ellis Lesh
1987-1988 *None Found*
1989 Bunn Bell
1989 Louise Shores Bell
1990-1991 *None found*
1992 Martha Belle Johnson Brogdon
1992 Thomas F. Butt
1992 Robert A. Leflar
1992 Robert G. Winn
1993 Irma F. Giffels
1994 Raymond J. Ellis
1995 Cyrus Sutherland
1995 Sylvia Geisler Swartz
1996 William L. Bush
1996 Juel Benbrook Hamblen Giles
1996 Richard Baker Greer
1997 Betty Lighton
1998 Mary D. Parsons
1998 Delford Rieff
1998 Lloyd O. Warren
1999 Alcuin "Al" Eason
2000 Lois N. Miller
2000 Ann Wiggans Sugg
2001 Dr. Jim Mashburn
2001 Clark McClinton
2002 James "Arlie" Pennington
2002 Charles W. Stewart
2003 John Miles Lewis
2003 Jean Newhouse
2003 Keith Newhouse
2004 Robert E. L. Bearden
2005 Phillip W. Steele

| | |
|---|---|
| 2005 | Ann Webb |
| 2005 | C. W. Webb |
| 2006 | Dr. Joe B. Hall |
| 2007 | Jessie Bryant |
| 2007 | Sheriff Kenneth McKee |
| 2008 | Henrietta Holcomb |
| 2009 | *No Award* |
| 2010 | Velda Brotherton |
| 2010 | Hugh Kincaid |
| 2011 | Dee Dee Lamb |
| 2011 | A. D. Poole |
| 2012 | Susan Chadick[53] |
| 2012 | Tony Wappel |
| 2013 | Tom Dillard |
| 2013 | Bob Besom |
| 2014 | David Malone |
| 2014 | Susan Young |
| 2014 | Dr. Betty Battenfield |
| 2014 | Dr. Mitch Singleton |
| 2015 | John McClarty |
| 2015 | Pat Parsons Hutter |
| 2016 | Gretchen Gearhart |
| 2016 | Carolyn Reno |
| 2017 | Ellen Compton |
| 2017 | Carl Collier |
| 2018 | Hoyt Purvis |
| 2018 | Roy Rom |
| 2019 | J. B. (Jerry) Hogan |
| 2019 | Kelly and Donna Mulhollan |

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Endnotes

[1]For a short summary of the early days of the WCHS, see Matthew Kirkpatrick, "The Washington County Historical Society: The Beginnings," *Flashback* 54, no. 4 (Autumn 2004), pp. 171-174.

[2]*Flashback* 1, No. 1 (March 1951), p. 1.

[3]Ibid., 18, No. 4 (November 1968), p. 1.

[4]Ibid., *Flashback* 1, No. 1 (March 1951), p. 1.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., *Flashback* 2, No. 1 (February 1952), pp. 1-2.

[9]Ibid., p. 1.
[10]Kirkpatrick, "Washington County," p. 173.
[11]*Flashback* 1, No. 1 (March 1951), p. 4.
[12]See also Michael J. Dabrishus, "Walter J. Lemke and the Revitalization of the Washington County Historical Society," *Flashback* 39, No. 2 (May 1989), p. 26-31.
[13]"Historical Society to Preserve All Lore of City and County," *Flashback* 34, No.1 (February 1984), p. 40, and *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, February 11, 1927, p. 1.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]*Northwest Arkansas Times*, June 22, 1938, p. 4.
[17]*Flashback* 28, No. 2 (May 1978), p. 2, and *Northwest Arkansas Times*, Sesquicentennial Edition, July 16, 1978, p. 31.
[18]Julianne S. Allison, "Walter John Lemke," online entry, *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2923. Accessed April 6, 2019.
[19]*Northwest Arkansas Times*, April 13, 1946, p. 1.
[20]Ibid., December 4, 1968, p. 1.
[21]Walter John Lemke Papers (MC L541), University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections, https://libraries.uark.edu/specialcollections/findingaids/Lemke/. Accessed April 6, 2019.
[22]All four issues of the 2001 *Flashback*, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the WCHS, were devoted to excerpts from the journal during the Walter J. Lemke years (1951-1968). *Flashback* went to its smaller, more compact size with the May 1972 issue.
[23]For more details about and a full list of *Flashback* editors, see J. B. Hogan, 2019, "*Flashback* Editors Through the Years," *Flashback* 69, No. 1 (Spring 2019), pp. 36-43.
[24]Ibid., 11, No. 1, (February 1961), p. 1.
[25]Ibid., 19, No. 1 (February 1968), p. 33.
[26]Ibid., 29, No. 1 (February 1979), p. 2.
[27]Ibid., 44, No. 4 (November 1994), p. 46.
[28]*Flashforward*, newsletter of the Washington County Historical Society, 3, No. 1, February 1998, p. 4.
[29]*Flashback* 7, No. 4 (July 1957), p. 36.
[30]Ibid., 18, No. 2 (May, 1968), p. 36.
[31]Ibid., 21, No. 1 (February 1971), p. 1.
[32]Ibid., 34, No. 4 (November 1984), p. 33.
[33]In recent years, the Headquarters House Museum Manager was Tess Kidd.
[34]Fayetteville Restoration, Inc. was a non-profit organization formed in late 1975. The stated purpose was "to acquire, improve, maintain and operate historical properties in Fayetteville, Arkansas." Its first directors and incorporators included R. Dale Christy, Curtis Shipley, Carolyn Newbern, and Pat Donat. "Articles of Incorporation, Washington County Archives," Book 2: 653-656.
[35]Maintenance of WCHS properties is the responsibility of the Property Management committee, in recent years headed by John Paul Davis and former WCHS President

Kim Smith.

[36]*Flashback* 13, No. 2 (May 1963), pp. 39-42.

[37]*Flashforward* No. 74, June 2013, p. 4.

[38]*Flashback* 22, No. 4 (November 1972), p. 47.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., 2, No. 1 (February 1952), p. 1.

[41]*Flashforward*, No. 26, September 2003, p. 4.

[42]Ibid., No. 35, June 2005, p. 4.

[43]Ibid., No. 67, November 2011, p. 6.

[44]Ibid., No. 72, November 2012, p. 6.

[45]"Twenty Years of History: Headquarters House Gardens, Washington County Master Gardeners, 1997-2017," presentation by Jan Lefler, June 1, 2017.

[46]"HQH Year-by-Year Garden Notes from WCMG Leadership (1997-2018)," Washington County Master Gardeners document, 2018.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Carl Totemeir died in 2004. A garden just to the west of Headquarters House is named for him. "Twenty Years of History: Headquarters House Gardens, Washington County Master Gardeners, 1997-2017."

[49]Susan Lesh Chadick is the mother of former WCHS President Vincent Chadick and related to three prior Distinguished Citizens: Dr. E. F. Ellis, Miss Elizabeth Dupree Ellis, and Dr. Ruth Ellis Lesh.

[50]*Flashback* 1, No. 2 (April 1951), p. 4.

[51]Ibid., 6, No. 6 (November 1956), p. 2.

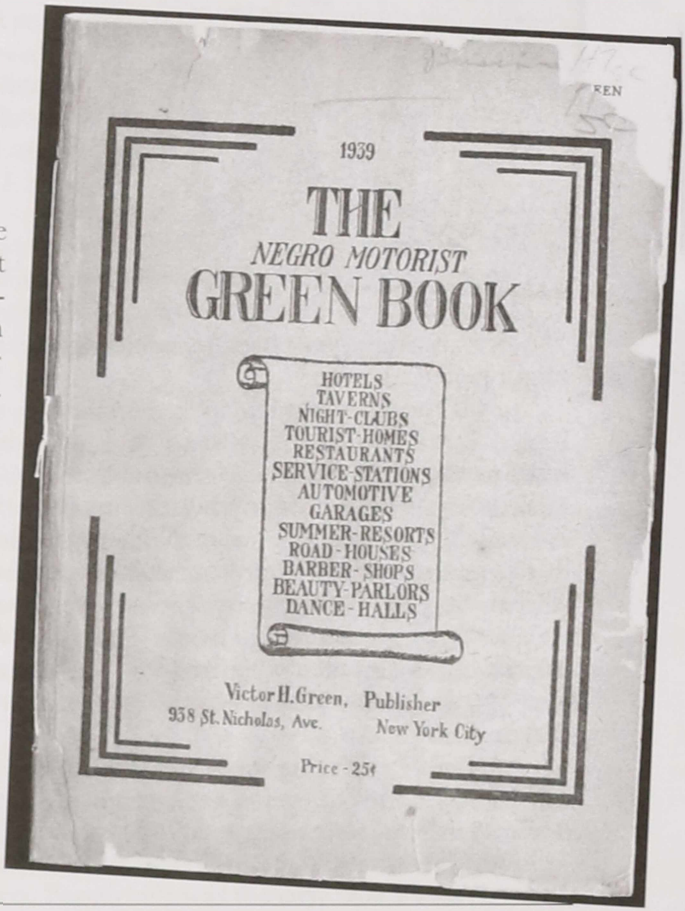
[52]Ibid., 10, No. 2 (April 1960), p. 6.

[53]Ibid., 22, No 2 (May, 1972), pp. 43-46.

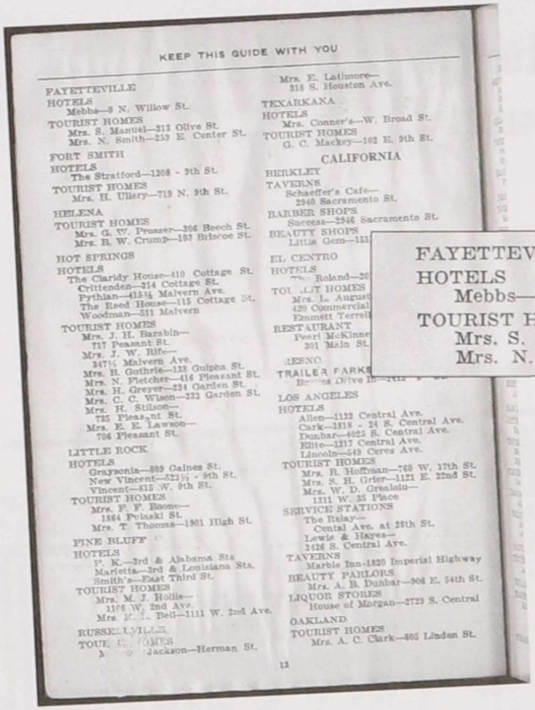
# Fayetteville in the *Green Book*: "A Knit Community"

*By David Edmark*

In *Green Book*, the 2018 film judged Best Picture at the Academy Awards, Don Shirley's character portrayed by Mahershala Ali travels the South on a piano concert tour with his chauffeur taking him to overnight venues that accommodated African-American guests in segregated 1962 America. The white chauffeur knew where to take Shirley by consulting the annual publication titled that




*David Edmark teaches online courses at the University of Arkansas School of Journalism and Strategic Media. He is a retired communications director at the UA System Division of Agriculture and a longtime local journalist.*



KEEP THIS GUIDE WITH YOU

FAYETTEVILLE
HOTELS
Mebbs—9 N. Willow St.
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. S. Manuel—313 Olive St.
Mrs. N. Smith—259 E. Center St.
FORT SMITH
HOTELS
The Stratford—1208 - 9th St.
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. H. Ullery—713 N. 9th St.
HELENA
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. G. W. Prosser—306 Beech St.
Mrs. B. W. Crump—103 Briscoe St.
HOT SPRINGS
HOTELS
The Claridy House—410 Cottage St.
Crittenden—214 Cottage St.
Pythian—413½ Malvern Ave.
The Reed House—115 Cottage St.
Woodman—511 Malvern
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. J. H. Sarmbin—
717 Peasant St.
Mrs. J. W. Rife—
347½ Malvern Ave.
Mrs. B. Guthrie—133 Quipha St.
Mrs. N. Fletcher—416 Pleasant St.
Mrs. H. Greyer—234 Garden St.
Mrs. C. C. Wison—322 Garden St.
Mrs. H. Stilson—
725 Pleasant St.
Mrs. E. E. Lawson—
706 Pleasant St.
LITTLE ROCK
HOTELS
Grayanola—809 Gaines St.
New Vincent—523½ - 9th St.
Vincent—815 W. 9th St.
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. F. F. Boone—
1864 Pulaski St.
Mrs. T. Thomas—1901 High St.
PINE BLUFF
HOTELS
P. K.—3rd & Alabama Sts.
Marietta—3rd & Louisiana Sts.
Smith's—East Third St.
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. M. J. Hollis—
1106 W. 2nd Ave.
Mrs. E. L. Bell—1111 W. 2nd Ave.
RUSSELLVILLE
TOURIST HOMES
[illegible] Jackson—Herman St.
Mrs. E. Lathmore—
318 S. Houston Ave.
TEXARKANA
HOTELS
Mrs. Conner's—W. Broad St.
TOURIST HOMES
G. C. Mackey—102 E. 9th St.
CALIFORNIA
BERKLEY
TAVERNS
Schaeffer's Cafe—
2940 Sacramento St.
BARBER SHOPS
Success—2946 Sacramento St.
BEAUTY SHOPS
Little Gem—151[illegible]
EL CENTRO
HOTELS
[illegible] Roland—20[illegible]
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. L. August[illegible]
420 Commercial
Emmett Terrell
RESTAURANT
Pearl McKinne[illegible]
201 Main St.
RENO
TRAILER PARKS
[illegible]
LOS ANGELES
HOTELS
Allen—1122 Central Ave.
Cark—1818 - 24 S. Central Ave.
Dunbar—6021 S. Central Ave.
Elite—1217 Central Ave.
Lincoln—649 Ceres Ave.
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. R. Hoffman—740 W. 17th St.
Mrs. S. R. Grier—1121 E. 22nd St.
Mrs. W. D. Grenoldi—
1211 W. 35 Place
SERVICE STATIONS
The Rebasco—
Central Ave. at 28th St.
Lewis & Hayes—
2426 S. Central Ave.
TAVERNS
Marble Inn—1820 Imperial Highway
BEAUTY PARLORS
Mrs. A. B. Dunbar—906 E. 54th St.
LIQUOR STORES
House of Morgan—2723 S. Central
OAKLAND
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. A. C. Clark—805 Linden St.

13

The *Green Book* from 1939 incl-cudes an entry for Fayetteville on page 12. This was the city's first appearance in the guide, which began publication in 1936. All *Green Book* images courtesy of New York Public Library.

FAYETTEVILLE
HOTELS
Mebbs—9 N. Willow St.
TOURIST HOMES
Mrs. S. Manuel—313 Olive St.
Mrs. N. Smith—259 E. Center St.

year *The Travelers' Green Book ("Assured Protection for the Negro Traveler")* that listed city by city the hotels and restaurants known to accept African Americans.

One of Shirley's tour stops was Little Rock, which was as far northwest as the tour went. So, what if Shirley had been scheduled to play in Fayetteville? Where might he have stayed?

If the chauffeur had looked up the Fayetteville listings on page 9 of that year's edition, he would have found only one venue. It was listed as "N. Smith Tourist Home" at 259 E. Center St. In other annual issues there would have been as many as three options listed for Fayetteville but never any more. None of the three were actual hotels or full-time restaurants but instead individual residences in the city's African-American community whose owners took in overnight boarders and in some cases served meals. The guests were more likely to be African-American men who lived elsewhere in the state but who had temporary weekday jobs in Northwest Arkansas such as on construction projects.

Before exploring some known information about the Fayetteville listings, a look at overall background information about the *Green Book* and its role is in order.

## About the Publication

The annual publication is popularly known as the *Green Book*, but it had a few slight name changes in its tenure from 1936 to 1967.

At its inception it was *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. It suspended publication from 1942 to 1946 because of World War II, resuming in 1947. In 1952 it was renamed *The Negro Travelers' Green Book*. In 1960 it became *The Travelers' Green Book*. In 1962 it was changed to *Green Book Guide for Travel and Vacations*. In 1963 it became *Travelers' Green Book* until it ceased publishing in 1967.[1]

Victor H. Green, a Harlem postal worker, founded the publication after he and his wife encountered discrimination on a car trip. Its first edition listed places in the New York area that accommodated African Americans. The next year it converted to a national publication with lists of rooming houses, hotels, barber and beauty shops, and restaurants that would serve black travelers.[2]

The opening page in the 1949 edition explains the publication's purpose:

> *With the introduction of this travel guide in 1936, it has been our idea to give the Negro traveler information that will keep him from running into difficulties, embarrassments and to make his trips more enjoyable. . . . There will be a day sometime in the near future when this guide will not have to be published. That is when we as a race will have equal opportunities and privileges in the United States. It will be a great day for us to suspend this publication for then we can go wherever we please, and without embarrassment. But until that time comes we shall continue to publish this information for your convenience each year.*[3]

Green died in 1960 and four years later the federal Civil Rights Act became law, prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations.[4] *The Green Book*'s final edition in 1966-67 contains a page headlined "Civil Rights: Facts vs. Fiction" with a note on the 1964 law's provisions on public accommodations: "Effective at once, every hotel, restaurant, theater, or other facility catering to the general public must do exactly that. Thirty-one state laws already in effect have even stronger provisions." The article then lists those states and summarizes their stronger laws. (Arkansas is not listed among them.)[5]

## The *Green Book* in Fayetteville

From the 1930s to the 1960s, the *Green Book* listed several Arkansas cities with establishments that reported their availability to African-American travelers. Fayetteville was the only Northwest Arkansas city that appeared in the annual list. Although its African-American population was small compared to cities in other regions of Arkansas, it still had the largest concentration in the state's northwest corner.

That was in a neighborhood along and adjacent to Center Street east of the Washington County Courthouse. The first Arkansas listings appeared in the 1939 edition, including three in Fayetteville as follows:

*HOTELS*
Mebbs – 9 N. Willow St.

*TOURIST HOMES*
Mrs. S. Manuel – 313 Olive St.
Mrs. N. Smith – 259 E. Center St.[6]

Several interviews with current residents of Fayetteville's African-American community indicate that the reference to Mebbs is likely a typographical error that should read Webb. The address on Willow Avenue is apparently that of Rev. James W. Webb, the longtime pastor of St. James Baptist Church who was known for taking in overnight guests at a house he owned and also operated as a restaurant. It isn't known how the *Green Book* came to call the place Mebbs, but the error stuck and was never corrected. A survey of all the *Green Book* annual editions shows that places listed on Willow Avenue as Mebbs appear in each edition through 1950.[7] Webb died in 1953.[8]

According to listings in the Fayetteville Public Library's available R.L. Polk and Co. annual city directories, Webb is listed as having a restaurant at 101 N. Willow Ave. in 1939, a residence at 17 N. Willow Ave. in 1947, and a residence at 154 E. Meadow St. in 1951. He has no listings in the Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. directories for the 1940s or early 1950s.

The listing for S. Manuel in the Tourist Homes category apparently refers to Susie Manuel, who is remembered by current community residents as Mama Susie. She died in 1952 but her listing appears in all the *Green Books* from 1939 through 1956, always at the 313 N. Olive Ave. address, although the Polk city directories list her at 304 N. Olive Ave. in 1939 and 1947 and at 314 N. Olive Ave. in 1951. The Southwestern Bell directories list her at 314 N. Olive Ave. from 1949 to 1953.

Manuel's obituary identifies her as Susie Marshbanks Manuel, having died on Nov. 11, 1952, at age 90 and as the oldest living member of St. James Methodist Church at the time. She was the widow of Joseph Manuel, who was born a slave in 1858 in what later became West Virginia.[9]

The listing for N. Smith likely refers to Naomi Smith, who also rented rooms and ran a cafe at her house on Center Street. Her residence is listed in every *Green Book* published from 1939 to the final edi-

Susie Manuel, known in Fayetteville as "Mama Susie," is listed in the Green Book as a proprietor under "Tourist Homes." Photo courtesy Charlie Alison

tion in 1966-67. It's not clear if she operated the business that entire time and there is doubt about the *Green Book*'s address of 259 E. Center St. The Polk city directories list her at 304 E. Center St. in 1939, provide no listing for her in 1947 and 1951, and list her at 369 E. Center St. for every year from 1955 to 1965. The Southwestern Bell directories also place her at 369 E. Center St. starting in 1956 through 1967.

## The Proprietors

Jessie Bryant, born in 1926 and a longtime resident of Fayetteville's African-American community, remembers the people listed in the *Green Book* and their operations.[10] Bryant, a former Washington County Quorum Court member and a founder of the Northwest Arkansas Free Health Center (now WelcomeHealth), recalls that Fayetteville was somewhat off the beaten track for travelers in the 1940s and 1950s. U.S. 71, which connects to Fort Smith on the curving two-lane road that today is a scenic highway, didn't attract cross-country travelers in the numbers that Route 66 was known for. So black travelers were not likely to come through Fayetteville unless it was their destination.

"This place was bypassed because there were not that many people of color here," Bryant said. "If you got off 71, you were lost. You had a reason to come through here."

The travelers that she occasionally met at the neighborhood's rooming houses had stories to tell about their journeys. She said they came from other parts of Arkansas and were staying in Fayetteville at

the *Green Book*'s rooming houses for several days at a time while working at local jobs.

"You've got to remember that in this area, when you got to Fayetteville, that was the end of the African-American people. From there to the Missouri line, you didn't have black people. There was no place else in Fayetteville for them to stay either," Bryant said of the neighborhood.

"Mostly they were looking for places to live that were a lot more free than where they were traveling from. They were workers. They were cheap labor that companies who were building in Fayetteville at that time period would transport from one place to another," she said.

After the University of Arkansas began integrating in the late 1940s, African-American students were also among the people staying at the *Green Book*'s houses as well as other residents' homes in the neighborhood because they couldn't stay in either on-campus housing or in rental properties elsewhere in the city. Bryant said her home hosted Silas Hunt, the law student who in 1948 was the first black student to enroll at the UofA.

The Webb place on Olive Avenue was a three-story structure in Bryant's recollection at which rooms on the top floor were rented to customers. Bryant said the restaurant was on the main floor. The Webbs lived in another nearby house.

Emma Conley, a lifetime resident of the city who was born in 1931, remembers visiting the cafe at the Webb house.[11] "She used to cook meals," Conley said of Webb's wife. "We used to go down to Sister Webb's at lunch time and get pop and candy and chips."

The guest house that Susie Manuel ran on Olive Avenue was on a corner lot at Dickson Street, Bryant said. "She would open her house to overnighters who needed a place for the night. She lived in the house. It wasn't a large house and it was her home. She had a couple of extra rooms because she lived by herself."

Naomi Smith's house on Center Street was similarly a residence with rooms for rent upstairs and a cafe for the community. It sold barbecue, sandwiches, candy, and ice cream.

"It was like a little juke joint and you'd go in there and dance," said Virginia Denton, who was born in 1949 and was Smith's niece.[12] "People went there for recreation. It had booths."

Mary Ann Johnson, a community resident who was born in 1927, recalled Smith cooked the food at her establishment and opened it as a restaurant on weekdays with one young lady who helped her. "She got good business and she stayed open a long time," said Johnson. "We all stopped in on the weekends. The other people would

Susie Manuel–"Mama Susie"–pictured in later years. Photo is courtesy of Charlie Alison

be working and they'd be there every day. You'd eat all week and pay on Friday. That's when they (the rooming guests) would get paid. Some of them would go home (to their home towns on weekends) and some of them wouldn't because they'd come too far."[13]

They aren't listed in the *Green Book*, but Conley said a couple named Ben and Irene Walton operated a cafe for black travelers and residents on Meadow Street in what she called "an old lodge building." The city directories and telephone directories list the Waltons as operating the Ideal Inn and living at 204 E. Meadow Street in the 1950s and 1960s.

The *Green Book* didn't list any barber or beauty shops for Fayetteville as it did for other cities around the nation, usually those with larger African-American communities. But Fayetteville had some people in the black community who offered certain services to the residents.

One such person who did so without benefit of listings in the *Green Book* or local directories was Henry Ballard, who offered haircuts and shaves in a shop at his house. "I used to take my little boy there when he had his hair cut," Conley said. "It would have been in the 1980s when he stopped." Carlos Carr (who was Naomi Smith's grandson) remembered that the community called Ballard "Pappy."[14]

The rooming houses and cafes of the neighborhood east of the courthouse were more than just *Green Book*-endorsed businesses for out-of-towners; they were community mainstays for the people who lived there all year round. Referring to the proprietors of those establishments, Bryant said, "They also worked outside of their homes and served the community in their off hours, their after-work hours.

They had second jobs." Residents in the black community were people who "didn't have anything" and where basic utilities remained unconnected for many years. "You didn't get anything. You were basically ignored."

Bryant described the place as "a knit community" of citizens working together while the larger white community paid it little mind. The churches–St. James Methodist and St. James Baptist–served as civic centers, playgrounds, nursery schools, and meeting places for organizations of black residents.

So the neighborhood would be the natural magnet for African Americans visiting Fayetteville from elsewhere, whether temporarily or in search of a new place to settle. "Most of them, they were not tourists, they were not travelers," Bryant explained. "They were people who were seeking a place to maintain a living and to live."

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Endnotes

[1] The New York Public Library Digital Collections, *The Green Book*. Accessed at https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book#/?tab=about.

[2] DeNeen L. Brown, "'Life or death for black travelers': How fear led to 'The Negro Motorist Green Book,'" *The Washington Post*, June 1, 2017.

[3] "Introduction," *The Negro Motorist Green Book, An International Travel Guide*, 1949 Edition, p. 1.

[4] Brown, "Life or Death."

[5] "Civil Rights: Facts vs. Fiction," *Travelers' Green Book*, International Edition 1966-67:2.

[6] *The Negro Motorist Green Book*,1939, p. 12.

[7] The New York Public Library Digital Collections, *The Green Book*.

[8] Communication from Rev. Curtiss Smith, pastor of St. James Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas. May 22, 2019.

[9] "Susie Manuel, Longtime City Resident, Dies," *Northwest Arkansas Times*, November 12, 1952.

[10] Interview with Jessie Bryant, Fayetteville, Arkansas. March 22, 2019.

[11] Interview with Emma Conley, Fayetteville, Arkansas. April 30, 2019.

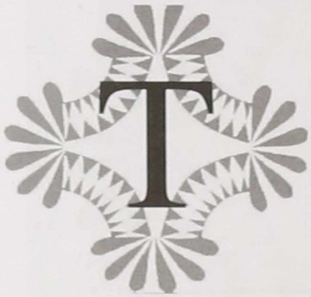
[12] Interview with Virginia Denton, Fayetteville, Arkansas. April 17, 2019.

[13] Interview with Mary Ann Johnson, Fayetteville, Arkansas. April 16, 2019.

[14] Interview with Carlos Carr, Fayetteville, Arkansas. April 23, 2019.

# Quilts: Pieced Tales of Comfort from Washington County History

*By Nancy Hartney*



he life-long marriage between Isabella Clark Kinnibrugh and William Henry Engels is an adventure spun from family lore and historical fact. A motherless boy, riding behind his uncle on a horse, travels half way across Arkansas where he meets a new friend and eventually builds a life-long legacy and new town. The tale of Mary Elizabeth "Aunt Mate" Trammel Tuttle, no less intriguing, lives on in a crazy quilt "storybook."

Isabella's story begins in 1828 when her Virginian parents James Kinnibrugh (1792-1843) and Jane Moore Kinnibrugh (1799-1872) settled in the northwest corner of Arkansas. By November 1834, Isabella Clark Kinnibrugh was born, the first Kinnibrugh in a long line of tough, broadminded stock.

Years later, the area known as Engels Mill and still later renamed Farmington, became the stage for the Isabella Kinnibrugh and William Henry Engels (1830-1917) story.

Born in this sparsely populated area, Isabella grew up among the original families settling the northwest corner. Children were in short supply, so she welcomed William as a playmate when he arrived.[1]

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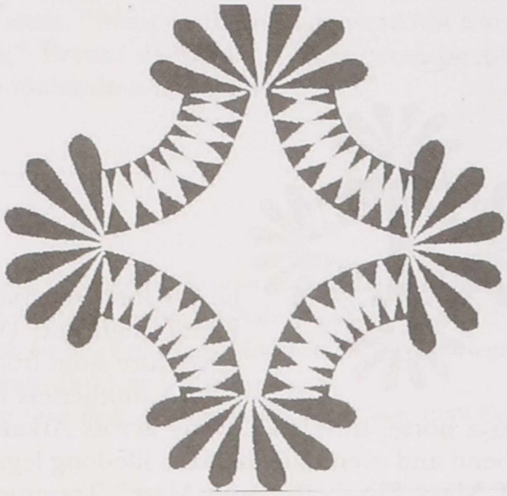
*Nancy Hartney is the author of two short story collections and is completing a novel set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War at the intersection of the Civil Rights and Women's Movements. She is retired from the Fayetteville Public Library, Research Services.*

Little did either realize she would eventually become William's wife and him a founding town father.

When William was five and his mother died, he lived for a time with his widowed father and siblings in Batesville in Independence County. Hard times made it necessary for William to be farmed out. Abraham Allen, his uncle, agreed to take him on. Allen saddled up and rode to Batesville, collected William, and returned home to Washington County with his nephew seated behind him on the horse.

Later, William returned to Batesville to live with his father until the patriarch died in 1843. Then thirteen, William subsequently returned to live with his uncle who raised him in Washington County.[2]



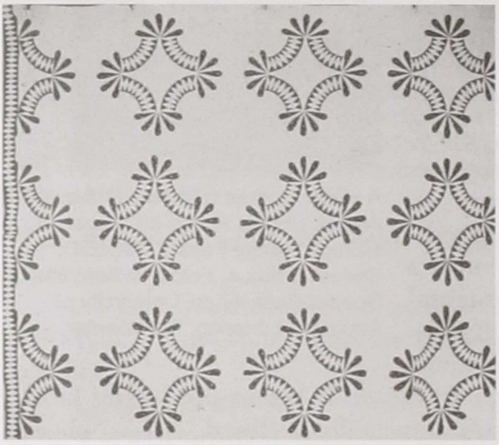
(Above) William Henry Engels and Isabella Clark Kinnibrugh Engels, 1910s. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark HIstory / Collection (S-90-21N57). (Below) "Democratic Victory" quilt without border, pieced by Isabella Kinnibrugh Engels and her mother Jane Moore Kinnebrugh, c. 1856. (See https://barbarabrackman.blogspot.com/2018/10/political-quilts-4-democratic-victory.html).

Fayetteville (originally Washington Courthouse) and Springdale (originally Shiloh) were the defining population centers for the northwest Ozark hill country where the Kinnibrughs and scattered other families had settled southwest of Fayetteville.

Four families with the Kinnibrughs established the first church for their unnamed nascent community, a Methodist Church that they call "Our Ebineezer."[3]

Early on, Isabella's mother, Jane, taught her quilt piecing, a skill necessary to early homesteads. Quilts were used as covers for warmth, room dividers for privacy, and window coverings to hold the

chill at bay. But they were more than useful. Quilts were a country language, a gift marker for a birth, wedding, a memory record, and an art form. Traditionally, quilting skills were passed from mother to daughter, friend to friend, and grandmother to granddaughter or sister to sister. Southern women, especially those from middle and lower economic circumstances, used their needles, fabric scraps, and quilting skills to make practical, useful items. Quilting get-togethers or quilting bees, valued as necessary social gatherings, allowed women to work as a group and tell their personal stories, vent frustrations, and enjoy the company of other women in their otherwise narrowly domestic, work-worn lives.[4]



A sketch of "The Democrat" quilt with "Wild Geese Chase" border, sometimes called "Whig's Defeat" pattern, by Polly Gray, c. 1826-1836. (See https://barbarabrackman.blogspot.com/2018/10/political-quilts-4-democratic-victory.html).

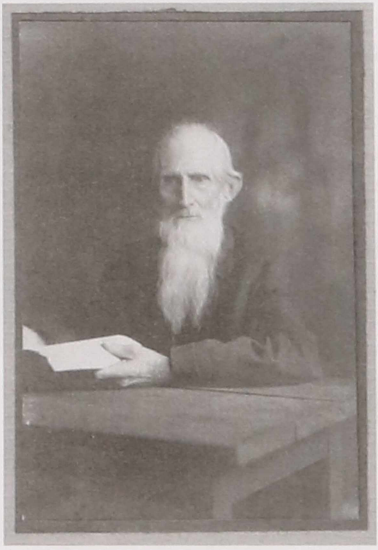
Jane Kinnibrugh, in teaching her daughter Isabella needle-and-thread skills, passed along material comfort and inheritance with each lesson which reflected the personal, economic circumstance, and cultural milieu in which the quilt was created.

Sometimes these sewing endeavors allowed political statements to creep in. Mary (Polly) McBride Gray's "Whig's Defeat" is an early example of a quilt as political statement.

From Tennessee, Polly and her husband John V. Gray travelled to northwest Arkansas where they settled sometime in the early 1800s. Polly became known for her quilts and her garden of moss roses, lilacs, and peonies. Her best known quilt, "Whig's Defeat," pieced in blue and white, utilized a centered blue medallion with traditional "Wild Goose Chase" border. The Gray family, however, called the pattern "Arkansas Democrat" possibly as a tribute to John V.'s friendship with "Old Hickory" Andrew Jackson. Originally, that quilt seems to have consisted of four blocks, each with a central medallion and "Wild Goose Chase" border. One block with a single medallion has survived thanks to Polly's great-granddaughter Frances W. Jones.[5]

One of Isabella's first quilts, which she called "Democratic Victory," was completed in a new red fabric based on that earlier

quilt done by Polly Gray. Isabella's "Democratic Victory" had no border and used nine smaller and three half medallions on the top reflecting the multi-block style then in vogue. Mother and daughter worked hard to finish the quilt for the December 7, 1856, wedding of Isabella and William. In fact, on their wedding day, the quilt was still in the frame having the last squares worked in.[6]



A studio portrait taken in 1910 of William H. Engels at age 80. Engels-Kinnibrugh Family Papers (MC554), Series X, Box 4, Folder 4, Item 36. Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

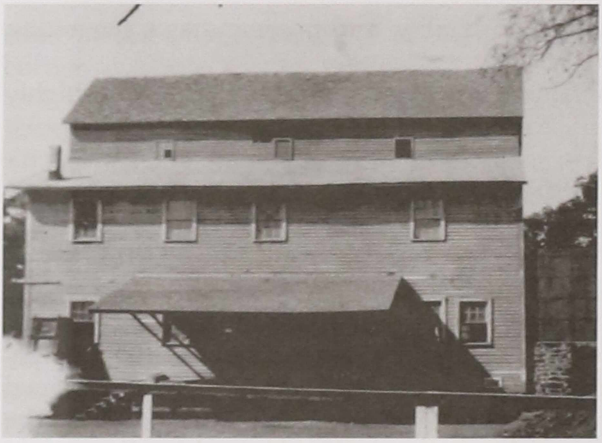
Quilts, made in three parts, include a decorative layer or quilt top, the batting or middle insulating layer, and the backing. The three layers are sewn together or quilted, hence the name for the finished piece. Quilt tops included piecework or small scraps of material sewn together, appliqué, or designs sewn onto a larger piece. Sometimes ornamental needlework such as cross-stitch, embroidery, or other embellishments were added. About 1840 when textile mills began producing fabric, the task of saving and using scraps gradually declined.[7]

Soon after their marriage, the couple moved into a new house William had built.[8] The house stood near a small, mule-powered gristmill, built by William about six years prior to his marriage. The community grew up around the home and mill. Most folks referred to the collection of families as Engels Mill.

After their wedding, things happened in rapid succession for the young Engels couple. The first of seven children was born one year after the marriage. The following year "William drove…to St. Louis to buy a reaper, one of the first in the county. The trip of 700 miles and twenty-nine days with a two-horse wagon was worth the effort: grain became the family's fortune and protector."[9]

As the clouds of the Civil War gathered, Isabella's father James Kinnibrugh distinguished his family by freeing all of his own slaves, buying his sister's slaves, and freeing them. He gave these freed people housing and work. By the time the war erupted, her father was too old to take up arms.[10]

William was passed over for military service because of his gristmill work. The nearby White Mill, producing 10,000 pounds of flour



A 1934 photo of the Farmington Flour Mill located between the Kinnibrugh and Engels houses, just before it burned. Engels-Kinnibrugh Family Papers (MC554), Series X, Box 4, Item 38. Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.

per day—and where William sometimes worked—was torched.

Not wishing to tempt fate, William had carefully hidden his rifle in a tree while Isabella put her quilt inside a wall. They worked their smaller mule-powered gristmill, played the part of sober citizens, and kept their valuables hidden. As a result, their mill and fine house went unmolested thus sparing the family those losses.[11]

The family, however, was not entirely spared from the war. Two Kinnibrugh sons fought for the Confederacy and one died in the conflict.[12]

During the Civil War, the community, town square, and homes were burned in succession by Confederate or Federal troops as they occupied the area. The December 1862 Battle of Prairie Grove, ten miles west of the Engels' mill, was initially won by the Confederates and then abandoned to Union occupation. The confiscation of cattle, horses, and poultry by one side or the other, left area residents open to starvation. Later, armed groups of bushwhackers and jayhawkers, those outlaw marauders under no flag, roved the area raiding, plundering, and further depleting the farms and community.[13]

After the war, Isabella took her quilt out of the wall and "began making new quilts in earnest, eventually piecing one fine quilt for each of her seven children, including an exact replica of the 'Democratic Victory' her mother had helped her with in 1856."[14]

## Traditional Expectations for Ozark Women

Customarily girls were expected to complete twelve quilt tops by the time of their engagement. An ideal hope chest included twelve quilts and two pillows. Common quilting symbols used by these young women and older textile masters included tulips, rings, and hearts for

love, pineapples signifying hospitality, and pomegranates suggesting abundance.[15]

Women during Isabella's lifetime led lives that were highly regulated and generally confined to the running of the household. In rare communities, especially those in more remote areas, women's voices resonated through their homemaking crafts, sewing skills, and family gardens albeit without fanfare or recognition. They worked beside their husbands adding to the family resources, and, in rare circumstances, spoke up on matters of community.

James Kinnibrugh, Isabella's father, was the largest landholder in their nascent community. As a consequence, Isabella's dowry included "a sizable acreage of family land." While quilts remained the wife's exclusive property, control of any land usually passed to the husband. William envisioned a town so he "had it [e.g., land] surveyed and platted, and the first streets named. Lots sold for $25 each."[16] These lots became the original town site of Farmington. William farmed, worked as a miller, and for a time operated the post office. He was active in the local Methodist Church. Isabella was at his side.

The couple built a three-story, steam-driven mill that operated until 1935 when it burned to the ground.[17]

The Engels Mill community, eventually renamed Farmington, continues to thrive in Washington County slightly southwest of Fayetteville.

## Trammel Crazy Quilt as Birthday Present

In 1894 Mary Elizabeth Trammel, known in the community as "Aunt Mate," stitched together a crazy quilt, "laid out. . . in diagonal blocks," to honor the fortieth birthday of her third child, Edward Clinton Trammel (1854-1915). Embroidered by Aunt Mate, the quilt "featured her son's birthday block, her helpers' names Lula and Lizzie, great aunts, and neighbor Mattie Buchanan. Little pictures of animals, flowers, and scenes" were stitched into the top.

Great granddaughter Nina Ferguson remembers as a child, "On a cold snowy day, mother would bring the quilt from its moth ball scented chest, spread it on a bed, and tell the little stories. . . . Black Beauty, grandpa's horse, stitched in white on a black ground . . . a pink-nosed white mouse eating strawberries . . . a quirky owl holding a parasol . . . three baby chicks floating down a stream in an old felt hat." All became a favorite bedtime "storybook" for great-granddaughter Nina who inherited the quilt from her mother who died in 1970.[18]

The Trammel quilt contains cotton, wool, and other common fabrics as well as snippets of velvet and satin. To finish the quilt, Aunt

Mate pieced a triangular block of black, green, and small plaid at each corner.

## Frozen River, Team of Oxen and a Family Called Tuttle

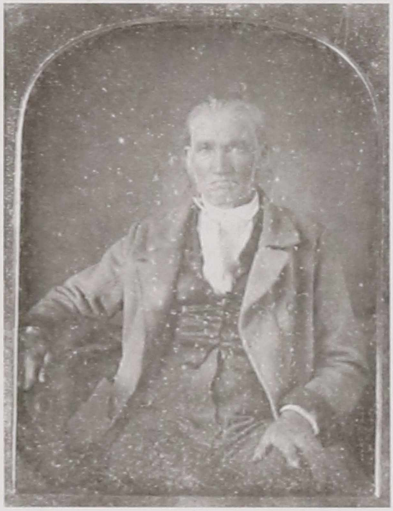
The tale of that crazy quilt birthday gift began in 1828 when "Solomon Tuttle drove four yoke of oxen from Tennessee over the frozen Mississippi to Arkansas. One of Solomon Tuttle's sons settled on Richland Creek near Fayetteville and a community known as Tuttle grew up around him."[19] Brother Nathan, wife Ann Eliza, and their daughter Mary Elizabeth joined Solomon.[20]

Nathan Tuttle died at age 37 with the consequence that his wife then married a man twenty-three years her senior. Mary Elizabeth did not care for "upbringing in her stepfather's home, as it was too stern for her liking."[21]

Since Mary Elizabeth (aka Mate) "did not care for her stepfather," she married 22-year-old George Singleton Trammel with "harty verbal consent of her parrence" at age thirteen.[22]

She delivered her first child at age fourteen. George called Mary Elizabeth "Matie" (known within the community as Aunt Mate). She settled into her lifetime role as matriarch of the Tuttle family while eventually raising five boys and three girls of her own and often helping with other children.

"The stream flowing near her home became Aunt Mate Branch while at Wesley they took to calling the Masonic Lodge the Aunt Mate Lodge."[23]



(Above) Solomon Tuttle, late 1840s to early 1850s. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-2152). (Below) The daughter of Solomon Tuttle, Mary Elizabeth "Mate" Tuttle Trammel, 1900s to early 1910s. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-2190).

Trammel family, early to mid-1890s. (Front, from left) Nathan Sweptson Trammel, Mary Elizabeth "Mate" Tuttle Trammel, and Sarah Analiza "Annie" Trammel. (Back, from left) Elizabeth Henley "Lizzie" Trammel, Mary Lou Trammel, Hosea Bryan Trammel, Edward Clint Trammel, and Jarred Ed Trammel. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-2199).

(Below) Detail from Mary Elizabeth Tuttle Trammel's 1894 quilt. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Janis Johnson Collection (S-91-131)

## Two Quilters, Two Families, One Rich Arkansas Legacy

Isabella Kinniburgh Engels, one of the last pioneers in Northwest Arkansas, lived within a mile of where she was born, raised, and had her family. She died in 1925 at age 90, having survived William by eight years.[24] She was an Arkansas quilter.

Mary Elizabeth "Aunt Mate" Trammel reigned as matriarch and quilter until her death in 1913. She lies in the Tuttle Cemetery, Washington County.

The Trammel quilt "is a fine example of a crazy quilt well done embodying story blocks," said Carolyn Reno, Collections Manager at the Shiloh Ozark Museum of Ozark History.[25]

Quiltmaking served a practical purpose as well as social and creative needs for women. Quilt frolics or quilting bees, organized independently by women, oftentimes also merged with funerals, weddings, births, and holidays as reasons to gather. Because opportunities for socializing were infrequent, it was "considered rude not to invite every able woman to the frolic."[26]

By the 1930s sewing machines became widely used. Over the years, the popularity of quilting and quilting groups has fluctuated.

The tradition continues into the twenty-first century with established quilting guilds and informal groups in Rogers, Springdale, and Fayetteville. Participation is usually open invitation. The Sunday edition of the *Northwest Arkansas Times* lists meeting details and locations of these groups in the Club News section.

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ENDNOTES

[1]Michael Luster, *Stitches in Time: A Legacy of Ozark Quilts* (Rogers, Arkansas: Historical Museum 1986), p. 8.

[2]Ibid.

[3] Jane Noble, "Farmington Washington County," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. Last modified November 22, 2016, accessed March 9, 2019, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=1005/. Note: A new clapboard church built 1892, with founders' names inscribed the stained-glass windows, was moved. That building served 105 years before a third building was erected on Hwy 170 South, Farmington, with stained-glass windows intact.

[4]Beth Ward, "Sisterhood of Stitchers," *Bitter Southerner*, April 2019, accessed May 8, 2019, https://bittersoutherner.com/the-sisterhood-of-stitchers-sewing-crochet-craftivism.

[5]Luster, "Stitches in Time," pp. 4, 5. Note that the Names Quilt AIDS project of the 1980s is a contemporary example of nationwide political statement made through quilts.

[6]Ibid., p. 8.

[7]Pamela Lochridge Kirkpatrick, "Quiltmaking," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. Last modified January 13, 2017, accessed December 27, 2018, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=6471.

[8]Luster, "Stitches in Time," p. 9.

[9]Ibid., p. 9

[10]*Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, February 27, 1925, v. 31, no. 84, p. 1.

[11]Luster, "Stitches in Time," p. 11.

[12]Noble, "Farmington Washington County."

[13]Don Montgomery, "Battle of Prairie Grove Historical State Park," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. Last modified October 25, 2017, accessed April 15, 2019, http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=513.

[14]Luster, "Stitches in Time," p. 11.

[15]*America's Glorious Quilts*, eds. Dennis Duke and Deborah Harding (New York: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, 1987), pp. 63, 64.

[16]Noble, "Farmington Washington County."

[17]Ibid. Note: The three-story mill stood north of the Highway 62 bridge across Goose Creek.

[18]Mayme Ferguson and Nina Ferguson, "A History in Stitches,"*Rural Arkansas,* May 1984, p. 6.

[19]Tuttle, an unincorporated community in Washington County, is southeast of Fayetteville, west of Wesley, northeast of Elkins and south of Goshen. Hwy 74 is the major road through Tuttle. *U.S. Geological Map, Arkansas*. Compiled in 1990. Accessed April 6, 2019 at https://www.geology.arkansas.gov/docs/pdf/maps-and-data/ark_state_maps/arkansas-state-base-map-1-500000-scale-39x34.pdf.

[20]Luster, "Stitches in Time," p. 20.

[21]Julia Sevarine Reed, "Solomon Tuttle Revisited," family history supplement to *Solomon Tuttle of Old Mt. Comfort* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: Washington County Historical Society, 1961), p. 11, as compiled by Margaret I. Hawk, 1989. Note: Julia Sevarine Reed is the great-granddaughter of Solomon Tuttle.

[22]Julia Sevarine Reed, 1961. *Solomon Tuttle of Old Mt. Comfort and His Descendants* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: Washington County Historical Society, 1961), p. 18. Note: The original notation is found in "Marriage Book A, Washington County, AR."

[23]Luster, "Stitches in Time," p. 20.

[24]*Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, February 27, 1925, v. 31, no. 84, p. 1. The obituary indicates six grandsons as pallbearers: Garland Engels, John Preston Smith Jr., Engels Broyles, Hunter Broyles, Jack Broyles, and Russell Broyles. Also, see Engels-Kinnibrugh Family Papers (MC554), 1837-1970 inclusive dates. Donated by Catherine S. Martin, Conway, Arkansas, May 6, 1985 and June 1, 1991; and by Russell and Clara Broyles, Farmington, Arkansas, June 4, 1985. Special Collections Department, Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

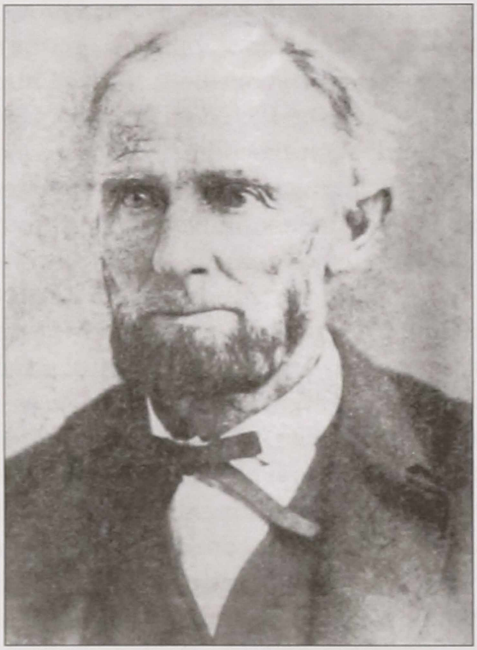
[25]Interview and quilt viewing with Rachel Whitaker, Research Specialist, and Carolyn Reno, Collections Manager, March 5, 2019, Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Springdale, Arkansas. The "Crazy Quilt" made by Mary Elizabeth Tuttle Trammel 1894, and owned by great granddaughter Nina Ferguson, is currently in the Shiloh Museum collection.

[26]Kirkpatrick, "Quiltmaking."

# The Independent Bill Cush*

*By David Benton*

*aka William Quesenbury, editor of the *South-West Independent* newspaper of Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1853-1856



William Quesenbury, possibly 1870s. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History (S-96-69)

By April 1850, companies were organizing in Cane Hill, Arkansas, to make an overland journey to the California gold fields. As the wagon trains started west, William Minor Quesenbury, better known throughout Arkansas as Bill Cush, felt an irresistible urge to go with them.

Was he drawn west by the lure of gold? He was no doubt excited by stories from California that led many people to think it could be got anyplace a shovel was stuck in the ground. But it was gold of a different kind that gave Cush's life worth. It was the fellowship with friends and leaders of his time, a

*David Benton is a great-great-grandson of Bill Cush. His writings include a book-length biography of Bill Cush, articles for the Chronicles of Oklahoma, Florida Accent, and Texas Parks and Wildlife magazine. The following article is based on two chapters of Benton's Bill Cush book.*

certain camaraderie with them. It was watching these men start west that caused Cush to leave his wife Adeline and his two boys behind–that and his unyielding passion for adventure.

So California Gold–whether yellow flecks in the bottom of a steel pan, glitter-streaked veins of quartz, or men of destiny moving heavy wagons westward–soon lured Cush across the western prairies, beyond the Great Divide, and on to the Pacific rock edge of the North American continent.[1]

He got back to Cane Hill in early December 1851. A few months later he was appointed receiver in the land office and moved his family to Fayetteville, a town of about 600 people.[2]

During the early weeks of 1853, as a new Quesenbury house was under construction, Cush prepared to launch his own newspaper.[3] It's not clear whether he was still with the land office at this point or if he had already rented space on the public square for a newspaper office.

The warp and woof of affairs in late 1852 and early 1853 enabling Cush to build a grand home and to establish his own newspaper remain a mystery. He hadn't gotten rich in California. His great uncle and namesake, William Minor Quesenbury, was still alive, as were his rich Bean uncles, so he probably hadn't inherited wealth. His earnings from the land office were surely a boon but far short of a fortune. So what happened during those early months in Fayetteville that gave him a boost up the economic ladder?

An attempt to answer that question requires a few scattered threads of information be gathered and woven into some kind of recognizable pattern. William E. Smith, another newcomer to Fayetteville, was inevitably a part of it.

There's no evidence that Smith backed Cush financially, but he had a publishing background, and in May 1852 launched his own Fayetteville sheet. Born in South Carolina about 1811, Smith had owned unsuccessful newspaper operations in Mississippi and Arkansas. In the spring of 1852 he brought his wife, three children and a slave, to Fayetteville. May 8 he issued the first number of the *Western Pioneer*.[4]

The *Arkansas Gazette* announced it six days later. That same number announced Cush's appointment to the land office.[5] Both Cush and Smith it seems moved their families to Fayetteville about the same time. Kim Allen Scott in his series of articles, "Windows on the Fron-

tier," wrote, "Quesenbury probably started...visiting Smith in the office of the *Western Pioneer* in the fall of 1852."[6]

Scott was right. Cush probably spent more time in Smith's office than he did his own at the land office. There are no numbers of the *Western Pioneer* found, so there is no way of knowing if he ever contributed to Smith's sheet. But if an edition of the paper ever turns up, don't be surprised if a familiar Q or Cush are found on page two at the end of some ludicrous commentary.

According to Scott, the evidence suggests "Smith's skills as a printer exceeded his abilities as an editor." Maybe that's why the *Pioneer* only issued a few numbers. Cush on the other hand had long been a popular correspondent. He was acquainted with many of the state's leading editors and publishers, was friendly with the editors of the *Cherokee Advocate*, the *Sacramento Daily Union* as well as others. He had probably watched the formation of the *Daily Union* from its beginning in 1851 while he was in California. Now, a little over a year later, he surely watched Smith put together a newspaper operation. He just as surely watched the sheet fail.[7]

Yet there were lessons to be learned from Smith. Scott put it this way: "William M. Quesenbury and William E. Smith began to realize they both had a gift the other man needed." Smith was an excellent printer, Cush was a talented writer.[8] And there is little doubt Cush's associations with newspapermen and his watching newspapers appear and disappear gave him an opportunity to develop editorial and management skills. According to Scott, Smith and Cush became good friends. Ad and Smith's wife, Mary, became friends too.[9]

In early 1853 while Cush went about the business of building a house, he was also getting a newspaper of his own started.

April 18, a warm pleasant day in Fayetteville, Cush set out for Cincinnati, Ohio, by way of Van Buren to purchase his newspaper plant.[10] He procured most of the equipment and supplies necessary to put out a paper and do job-shop work, all except a standing press. As for that indispensable machine, he called on millwright and joiner John McPherson to fabricate. "We submitted our wants to him," Cush later explained, "and in a few days he furnished us with a press equal to any made, and at one tenth of the cost."[11]

Cush was so pleased with McPherson's work he tried to convince him to move to Fayetteville. The sales pitch must have worked. Three years later the Cincinnati millwright and joiner ran an advertise-

ment in Cush's paper soliciting business and stating he wished to locate in the Fayetteville vicinity.[12] Cush shipped his plant, the press, type, paper, ink and all the other accouterments back to Arkansas aboard the steamer *General Scott*.[13] He later described the ill-fated shipment in rhyme:

*For the "Independent" was bought and shipped*
*In as fine a steamer as ever had dipped*
*Her paddles in water, or cables had slipped*
*To sail away fast and pleasant.*[14]

Once his equipment was on its way, Cush sailed separately to Little Rock by mail steamer arriving May 13 and got a room at Anthony House. That was Friday.[15]

He remained in the capital until Sunday morning. Kim Allen Scott wrote, "Quesenbury made sure he stopped at the *Gazette* office in Little Rock to convince editor Christopher Columbus Danley to give his proposed newspaper a 'puff' in the *Gazette*." Cush seems to have succeeded because the following Friday Danley described him as "a gentleman of high literary attainments and a decided genius." He wished him the "greatest measure of success in his new vocation."[16]

Cush continued on to Fort Smith aboard the steamer *Umpire No. 2*. Then he crossed Boston for home.[17] It had probably been a pleasant, uneventful trip for Cush: Elegant dining and strolling along the decks of steamers with a pipe in his mouth and a newspaper under his arm, probably visiting with old friends and new while plying the waters of the Ohio, Mississippi, and Arkansas rivers. He might not have known it until he got home, but the *General Scott* and his equipment hadn't fared nearly so well:

*Alas! alas! the fatal lot*
*that haunts the name of* General Scott–
*(The name this splendid craft had got;)*
*For snags and floods and fires all hot,*
*Conspired with bad luck in a plot*
*Against the steamer as she shot*
*Like a wild goose through the waters,*
*And quick as sinks a leaden chunk,*
*Down, down, the mighty vessel sunk*
*Among the fishes and the otters.*[18]

Workers retrieved Cush's part of the sunken cargo and it eventually got to Van Buren aboard the steamer *Summit*:

*To show that types when sunk in the waves*
*Will burst the bars of their watery graves*
*And up to the surface will pop,*
*Especially, when*
*A lot of stout men*
*Go down to their cells*
*And raise them to the top.*

*And so the "Independent" arose,*
*And with a crack of whips, and gees and "woes"*
*Arrived at the end of its journey.*[19]

The incident must have put Cush through a few days of high anxiety, to say the least. His equipment arrived in Van Buren aboard the *Summit* in late July and he made the tortuous trek across Boston to retrieve it. While he was there, he stopped to pay a visit to editor J.W. Washbourne at the *Intelligencer*. He still hadn't decided on a name for his sheet. When Washbourne announced the proposed paper, he wrote that the "child" was not yet Christened.[20]

It didn't take Cush long to come up with a name though. On August 25, with William E. Smith as his printer, he put out the first edition of the *South-West Independent*:[21]

*And high on the Ozark hills it hung*
*Its shingle out, and clamorous rung*
*"A Universal Attorney"—*
*To practice and plead in every court*
*Before the juries of fun and sport*
*In every question of love and hate,*

*In weighty matters of church and state—*
*To attend to all,*
*The great and small fry,*
*With the constant glance*
*Of a watchful, Paul Fry.*[22]

SOUTH-WEST INDEPENDENT.

A Journal for the Encouragement of Education, Agriculture, Internal Improvements, Fine Arts, Sciences, Religion, Political Information and the Interests of Humanity.

WM. QUESENBURY PROPRIETOR. FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS, SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 1854. VOL. I: NO. 22.

In the first edition, Cush explained how he got the paper up and running. "We have begun operations by devoting our whole time, energies and what little money we had, to the enterprise.... One principle—the cash principle we regard as cardinal. We shall make no mouthings about 'Pay the Printer'. If you get our paper, we'll get your money." Then he pointed to his job shop: "In the department of job printing, we are prepared to do as finished work as any office west of the Mississippi." He offered "Fancy type, inks of all colors, and every article necessary for cards, circulars, pamphlets, books."

As for politics, Cush proclaimed his paper would not take sides:

> *We shall write what we please. In politics, espousing neither Whiggery nor Locofocoism, we shall independently say what we consider right of public men and measures both in the Union and Arkansas. We shall avoid all personalities, considering it cowardly and contemptible, for an editor to use his columns to assail a private individual; and weapons we will not use ourselves, we shall neither lend nor hire to others for purposes of assault.*

Cush warned his readers that a second number wouldn't be issued the next week. "We are overwhelmed with work and have issued our first number to satisfy the expectations of our friends. On the regular publication day, week after next, we shall issue again and hope to... do so regularly ad infinitum."[23] On September 8, the *Independent* began its regular appearance.

Cush kept northwest Arkansas in stitches with his sharp wit and harmless satire.

A good example arose even before the first edition of the *Independent*. Robert Green from Missouri wrote a tongue-in-cheek note to editor Quesenbury asking why all the officials at the Military Railroad Convention at Fort Smith were colonels: "And I wish to know if all those mentioned with no title but Mr. to their names were privates? And how many regiments of troops are there at Fort Smith? Which of

the two Generals is highest in rank, Smithson or Mayers?"
As will be seen, Green picked the wrong editor to annoy. Cush delighted in such encounters, and in his first edition he published Green's letter in full followed by his own reply:

> *Now Mr. Robert Green we would have been pleased if you would not have troubled us with the above interesting document; but as you have subscribed and paid for your paper we shall not slight you entirely.*
>
> *We shall commence by giving you a piece of information not asked in your note. You are a tolerably verdant gentleman, and very probably, unless you improve wonderfully, the good people of Benton County will instead of Mr. Robert Green, denominate you "Green Bob."*

Cush told him there were as many generals and colonels in Missouri as Arkansas and he should have known that every gentleman with a titled name wasn't in the army. "When you have been here a year or so Mr. Green, and have got the wire edge worn off you a little, you will be surprised, as we are, that so few colonels officiated in the convention."

Cush invited him to come by his office in Fayetteville. He also offered to accompany him to Fort Smith to the convention. Then he wrote:

> *It is a strange thing Mr. Robert Green that you being newly arrived in this country, should plunge into such matters as you have. If you will concern yourself about the highest corn in your neighborhood instead of the highest colonel at Fort Smith, and the rank weeds and rank grass about, instead of generals' rank, you will make more money in the end, besides saving your credit for having just a little common sense.*[24]

Cush sent the year 1853 off into history with his New-Year's address beginning:

> *Let your field of life*
> *Be smooth or cloddy,*
> *A Merry New Year*
> *EVERYBODY!*

Washington County Historical Society

*announces*

## Annual Competition for Articles on History of Washington County

The Washington County Historical Society announces the 11th annual competition for the Walter J. Lemke Prize and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize with a call for submissions.

Topics can address any aspect of Washington County history, including archeology, lives of individuals, or records of institutions, and can be set in any time period. Both professional and amateur historians are invited to submit articles.

A $250 prize is offered in each of two categories: the Walter J. Lemke Prize for best article on Washington County history, with a preference given to subjects outside Fayetteville; and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize, with preference given for the best article about Fayetteville. Winners will be recognized at the society's annual meeting in October.

Manuscripts will be judged on contribution to the expansion of the county's history; originality of the subject; and use of primary and secondary sources. Manuscripts must be original material, and not previously published; they must be typed, preferably include endnotes, and have a maximum length of 40 pages, not inclusive of endnotes. The title page should be headed: "WCHS Prize," followed by the manuscript's full title, and the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email.

Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned. All submissions will be considered for publication in *Flashback*. WCHS reserves the right to award one or no prizes.

All submissions for both prizes will be deposited in the Special Collections Department of the University of Arkansas Libraries. Mail submissions to Lemke Prize, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701. Alternatively, submissions–as well as any questions–can be emailed to Patsy Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu by June 30, 2020.

*Dear merchants dreading money panics,*
*And oh ye hammering, hale mechanics,*
*Oh ye sovereigns full of freedom—*
*Oh ye doctors full of "bleed 'em."*
*Oh ye cunning peace destroyers,*
*Quibbling, quarreling, quirking lawyers:*

*Oh ye earth-salt, ill-paid preachers,*
*Oh ye rod-kings, bad-boy Teachers,*
*And even ye upon whose noses*
*Perennial bloom the red-rum roses—*
*Ye that swig your grog and toddy—*
*A happy new year EVERYBODY!*

Once Cush got his reader's attention, he reminded them about the *Independent*'s first year:

*Had ye not had the last advices,*
*And been well posted up in prices?*
*Did ye not read of the Indian battle*
*When the Pawnees chased the Sioux like cattle?*
*Read Robert Green, the friend of journals,*
*On railroads and Fort Smith Colonels?*
*Have ye not had all kinds of stuff,*
*From grave to glad*
*From truth to puff?*

*The comet came with a tail of flame,*
*The wonder of human eyes,*
*But his time soon sped and away he fled*
*Like a railcar of the skies!*

The entire address, composing 30 irregular stanzas, ended:

*I drink my toast—a happy New Year*
*To constant and cash subscribers, dear*
*To the SOUTH-WEST INDEPENDENT.*[25]

After boasting to his readers what a great job he and his staff

had done the first year, by the end of January 1854 Cush had to explain why the bad appearance of the paper. A cold front had swept down from Canada locking northwest Arkansas in ice. The *Independent* suffered. So did Cush and his readers:

> *The night of Friday 20th inst. was the coldest we ever experienced. Printing ink, writing ink, press joints—everything that had a particle of oil or water about it became flinty hard. Types clogged, and the press became unmanageable. The stoves lost the power of radiation. Under these and other bad circumstances, if anyone could wish a clearly printed sheet, he would be a man hard to satisfy, and of an unhappy disposition.*[26]

Cush's last sentence was no doubt an understatement for the assimilation of the public. It would be interesting to know what he shouted privately. Then editing a newspaper in the 1850s under the best of conditions would have likely evoked harsh language. Every word had to be hand written—Cush wrote with a goose quill he whittled himself—and each character of type had to be placed by hand.[27] So the work was slow. News and features from other sheets were used when they merited reprinting, often when they didn't.

Sometimes Cush used his columns to send a personal message, as when he invited a judge to dinner. "Dear Judge: —Rabbits not ruining, I shall expect the pleasure of your company to a dinner of 'Champion-of-Ireland Pea,' in their proper season—the produce of the paper you lately forwarded me from Washington City. Respectfully, W.Q."[28]

When ex-governor Roane got married early in 1855, Cush celebrated the event in print. The *Gazette* at Little Rock reprinted Cush's comments with this introduction: "Every thing passed off just as it should have done. We would give a more extended notice, but yield to Quesenbury, who claims the right to be poetical on the occasion. When he speaks our readers shall have the benefit of his notice."

"Poetical!" Cush responded in print, "Yes, and we shall be. The very ink in our ink-stand has resolved itself into globules of rhyme, and our old goose quill trembles as if moved by the spirit of Terpsichore." Cush tells about Roane's bachelor days as lawyer, soldier in Mexico, Lieutenant Colonel and then Colonel, and last—a famous Governor:

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- ❑ $500 Pioneer
- ❑ $1,000 Statesman
- ❑ $5,000 Empire Builder

Washington County Historical Society is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. Gifts above membership of $25 are tax deductible.

*Not last—not last—this quill's too fast,*
*Another station you've known*
*At the end of your race—*
*A married man's place,*
*Most delight of all, ain't it Roane?*

Cush described Roane at the altar; then he waxed philosophical. At the end he wrote:

*Now finally, John—Governor Roane,*
*Our ancient trusty friend,*
*May that good luck you've always known*
*Pursue you to the end:*
*You stand upon the bark of love*
*You and your happy bride*
*May kindly powers watch from above*
*And smooth life's billowy tide*
*Farewell—but hear, as off you shove—*
*May you have a pleasant ride!*[29]

Circulation soared and the *Independent* was read throughout Northwest Arkansas and in Indian Territory. The *South-West Independent* continued until late in 1856 then ceased publication. The latest edition extant is volume 3, September 5, 1856, although it's not known if any numbers were issued beyond that date. There's nothing in the September edition that gives a clue Cush had any intention of shutting down the paper. The following year though he gave poor health as the reason.

No matter why he closed the paper, no matter what the consequences for him and his family, during thirty-seven months of the *South-West Independent,* Bill Cush struck a chord that resonated beyond his own life and far into the twentieth century.

ENDNOTES

[1] "William Quesenbury Journal," March 27-April 9, 1850, David M. Rubinstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Microfilm: Periodical Department, David W. Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.
[2] *Arkansas Gazette*, May 14, 1852; Kim Allen Scott, "Windows on the Frontier," *Flashback* 39 (May 1989), p. 12; Pat Donat, "Adaline Quesenbury's Diary," *Flashback* 28 (November 1978), p. 37. This diary is a part of the William Quesenbury Journal. Adaline [known familiarly as "Ad") kept the journal from January 1 to May 23, 1853.
[3] Pat Donat, "Adaline's Diary," January 13, 1853, p. 39.
[4] Scott, "Windows on the Frontier," pp. 10, 11.
[5] *Gazette*, May 14, 1852.
[6] Scott, "Windows on the Frontier," p. 12.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Pat Donat, "Adaline's Diary," April 18, 1853, p. 45.
[11] Clipping, *South-West Independent*, August 25, 1853, William Quesenbury Papers, David M. Rubinstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Microfilm, 1-28-1854 to 9-5-1856: Periodical Department, David W. Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Clipping, "New Year's Address." Published in 1854 and distributed to patrons of the *South-West Independent*. Reprinted Saturday January 2, 1932, in the *Fayetteville Democrat*, Special Collections, David W. Mullins Library, University of Arkansas.
[14] Ibid. Lucile Price Turner, "Bill Cush Early Individualist," *Arkansas Gazette*, November 17, 1940, Special Collections, David W. Mullins Library, University of Arkansas. This is the second in a series of articles in the Sunday Magazine Section of the *Gazette*, November 10, 17, 24, and December 1, 1940.
[15] Notice of arrivals at the Anthony House, *Gazette*, May 20, 1853. The Anthony House was without a doubt the Crown Jewel of Arkansas Hotels. A two-story building with an enormous dining room, it offered numerous amenities including parlors and a bar. Outside the main building were slave quarters, stables and a carriage house. This celebrated hotel was destroyed by fire in 1875. See John Gould Fletcher, *Arkansas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1947), p. 109.
[16] Scott, "Windows on the Frontier," p. 13; *Gazette*, May 20, 1853.
[17] *Gazette*, May 20, 1853.
[18] See note 13.
[19] Ibid.
[20] *Gazette*, August 5, 1853; Scott, "Windows on the Frontier," p. 13.
[21] Clipping, *South-West Independent*, August 25, 1853, William Quesenbury Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. Microfilm: Periodical Department, David W. Mullins Library, University of Arkansas.
[22] See note 13.
[23] See note 21.
[24] Ibid.

[25]See note 13.
[26]*South-West Independent*, January 28, 1854, Microfilm: Periodicals Department, David W. Mullins Library, University of Arkansas.
[27]Rowena Gallaway, "For the Pleasure of his Friends," *Flashback* 8 (October 1958), p. 15. Cush refers to his "old goose quill" in his poem about the marriage of John Seldon Roane. See the *Arkansas State Gazette and Democrat*, March 9, 1855.
[28]*South-West Independent*, February 17, 1855.
[29]*Gazette and Democrat*, March 9, 1855.

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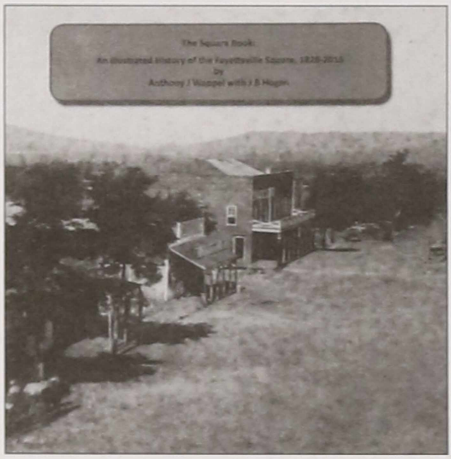

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